History of the Sikhs

Vol. V

The Sikh Lion of Lahore (Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 1799–1839)

History of the Sikhs is planned as a five-volume survey aiming to present a comprehensive view of the rise, growth and development of Sikh thought and action in every direction. This volume (V)—*The Sikh Lion of Lahore (Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 1799-1839)*, deals with Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh rose from the status of a petty chieftain to become the king of an empire extending from Gilgit and Tibet to the deserts of Sindh and from the Khyber Pass to the Satluj. He persuaded the turbulent Sikhs and Muslims to the Punjab to become the willing instruments of an expansionist policy which brought the Kashmiris and the Pathans of North-West Frontier and Baluchis of Multan province under his subjugation. His success was undoubtedly due to his ability to arouse the nascent sense of nationalism amongst his people and make them conscious that more important that their religion was the fact of their becoming a united people leading a harmonious life.

The book consists of six parts, Part One deals with the campaigns and conquests of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Part Two depicts his relation with neighbours and others. Part Three deals with his attitude towards secularism. Part Four describes Ranjit Singh's interest in establishing a cosmopolitan society in the Punjab and introducing an element of merriment in their humdrum life. Part Five deals with economic prosperity with special reference to the development of agriculture and growth of industry, trade and commerce. Part Six gives vivid portrait of the Sikh Lion of Lahore.

Dr. Hari Ram Gupta (1902–93), had his education at Lahore. He was the first person to receive the degrees of Ph.D. and D.Litt. in History from the University of the Punjab, Lahore, and his examiners were Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Sir Edward Maclagan, ex-Governor of the Punjab and Professor H.H. Dodwell of London University.

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The Sikh Lion of Lahore (Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 1799-1839)

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HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

Vol. V

The Sikh Lion of Lahore
(Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 1799-1839)

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Hari Ram Gupta

Munshiram Manoharlal
Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

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ISBN 81–215–0540–2 (for the set)
ISBN 81–215–0515–1 (vol. V)
This edition 2008

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Printed and Published by Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,
Post Box 5715, 54 Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi 110 055.

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Preface

If the historian is to fix the time in the history of the Punjab in medieval period, during which the people–Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others were most happy and prosperous, he would, without the least hesitation, name the reign of the Sikh Lion of Lahore, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Indeed, it was an era of order, tranquillity, prosperity, religious liberty and communal harmony, established for the first time in eight hundred years.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was undoubtedly a great king. He stands equal to renowned rulers like Chandragupta Maurya the Great, his grandson Ashoka the Great, great Gupta Emperors, Harshavardhana of Thanesar and Akbar the Great. In world history he can favourably be compared with Julius Caesar of the Roman Empire, Peter the Great of Russia, Frederick the Great of Germany, Napoleon Bonaparte of France, and George Washington of the United States of America.

Ranjit Singh's claim to greatness rests on the following five factors:

1. *Peace, Order and Tranquillity*

During the past one hundred years the Punjab had been in the throes of anarchy due to maladministration and foreign invasions. The invaders had caused immense destruction in men, money and material. In their trail they left behind chaos and confusion, plague and pestilence, and numerous dacoits and robbers in the indigenous population Ranjit Singh established peace, order and tranquillity. Captain A. Mathews of the British Army travelled from the Yamuna to the Chenab. On 16 May 1808, he recorded that military posts had been appointed in the whole country to check any disturbance. Travelling was safe. A capital crime or a robbery seldom occurred. In some cases plunderers and headmen of the villages near which robbery or murder had taken place were shot dead. As a result a single

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person with cash and ornaments could travel without apprehension of danger. Mathew's observation is confirmed by other contemporary writers and court chronicler, Sohan Lal Suri.

2. *Gateways of Invaders Closed*

Rajit Singh closed the passes in the Sulaiman mountains four times in his reign did the Kabul chiefs try to enter India. They were hurled back with enormous loss in men, horses and arms. He also ended the regular stream of hungry gangs from the North-West. They came here in search of bread and to settle down in the most fertile regions as permanent inhabitants like the Rohillas who changed the name of Katehar to Rohilkhand. The Maharaja held back the current of history which had flowed unchecked since the beginning of eleventh century. The whole Panjab had been ruined. In West Panjab between the Indus and the Ravi 3,756 deserted sites existed in Ranjit Singh's time.

3. *The Secular State*

The Maharaja created the first indigenous, magnificent, non-communal secular state in the current millennium. The Muslim rulers ruled by force and fear alone. The Sikhs, a small community, had suffered the most. Out of ten Gurus six had been subjected to cruel treatment. Nearly two lakh Sikhs, men, women and children, were killed by Mughals, Durranis and their henchmen. As a result the total population of the Sikhs at the beginning of Ranjit Singh's reign was not more than five lakhs. Ranjit Singh gave full freedom to Muslims except *azan* or a loud call from a mosque to indicate prayer time and cow killing. They were given due share in administration. Even the most sensitive departments of external affairs and artillery were controlled by Musalmans throughout his reign. In consequence the entire Muslim population in the Panjab stood by him during twelve years of holy war in the North-West Frontier Province against the Sikhs.

4. *Personal Traits*

Ranjit Singh was courteous, kind and generous to his defeated enemies. He received them in a public durbar by rising in his chair, and provided them with a decent cash allowance and grants of jagirs. M'Gregor, Secretary to the Governor-General of India, who met Ranjit Singh a number of times, wrote that the Maharaja was "possessed of powers of mind rarely met with either in the eastern or western world". He was a strict disciplinarian of a sort and insisted on execution of his orders promptly and fully. For disobedience of his general letter not addressed by name he fined Sham Singh Atarwala fifty

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thousand rupees. Diwan Kirpa Ram, Governor of Kashmir and grand son of Diwan Mohkam Chand, the builder of his power in early days, for disobedience of his prime minister Dhian Singh, was dismissed, fettered, imprisoned and fined nine lakh rupees. On payment in full he became a hermit and escaped to Banaras never to return to the Panjab. After Ranjit Singh he was offered Prime Ministership, which he declined. In the battle of Attock in 1813, Diwan Mohkam Chand, Commander-in-Chief of Ranjit Singh, was fighting against Fatah Muhammad Khan, Prime Minister of Afghanistan and his brother Dost Muhammad Khan. Ghaus Muhammad Khan, Darogha Topkhana, was there to support the Diwan. At the time of fighting Ghaus Muhammad declined to fire his artillery. The Diwan asked two Muslim deputies of Ghaus Muhammad to fire their guns. They also refused. The Diwan won the battle in spite of them. Ranjit Singh took no action against them. In the Durbar he only observed: "It was not proper for Ghaus Muhammad to remain inactive and we had almost lost the battle."

5. *Ranjit Singh's Contribution to His People*

Ranjit Singh was the one man of genius the Sikh Jat tribe had produced. He converted the Sikhs into a unified community. He made them a ruling race consisting of the finest soldiers, great generals and successful administrators. Had not this master spirit arisen among them, the Sikhs would have sunk into insignificance like others in the population. It was Aristotle's idea that moved Alexander in his march towards an empire. Ranjit Singh was inspired by Guru Gobind Singh's ideal to destroy the rulers' religious fanaticism and their high-handed policy in administration. It was Abraham Lincoln whose thoughts, ways and actions greatly influenced American life. Similarly Ranjit Singh's influence upon the Panjab has been enormous. He was a morning star for its people and beau-ideal for its young men.

6. *Relations with the British Government*

In his relations with the British Government of India Ranjit Singh was not at his best. Since 1809 for thirty years the Maharaja behaved like a vassal of the British Government. His first Prime Minister cum Commander-in-Chief was Diwan Mohkam Chand. In 1809 he advised the Maharaja to show to the British authorities that he was not a mere soft clay but that he had some iron in him. On the contrary his mother-in-law Sada Kaur and maternal Uncle Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, both Ranjit Singh's inward enemies, supported by Maharaja's foreign minister and confidential adviser, Faqir Aziz-ud-din, pressed him to accept the British terms in totality. In consequence he agreed as his domain's eastern boundary to the whole

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course of river Satluj from Mansarovar in Tibet to Mithankot and further to the sea instead of from Rupar to Mamdot. Thereby he lost a large part of Himachal Pradesh, Bahawalpur and the whole of Sind. From 1811 to 1838 he had been begging the British authorities with folded hands to permit him to conquer Sind. The most opportune time to subdue Sind was when the British at home were fully involved in the Napoleonic war, and in India in the Gorkha war and immediately after that in the Pindari and Maratha war.

In 1835 Sardarni Lachhman Kaur, chief of Firozpur, died issueless. She was a vassal of the Lahore Durbar. Besides this Ranjit Singh held forty-five other places in the cis-Satluj region. The English at once seized Firózpur and began converting it into a cantonment. The Maharaja's vakil at Ludhiana protested and informed the Maharaja, who kept mum. He never realised that it was a dagger pointed at the heart of his kingdom only 70 km distant. In 1838 he surrendered Shikarpur saying it was a present from him to the British. The same year, himself a paralytic, worked for 20 hours a day for months together for Lord Auckland's durbar at Firozpur. When Auckland came to bid him farewell, he could not rise in his bed and could not speak a word except making a gesture by his blazing eye. Within six months he mingled into eternity.

7. *Royalty, Romance, Music, Dance and Drama*

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Ranjit Singh loved to be called Badshah, but the people addressed him as Maharaja or Sarkar. The Sikhs designated him Singh Sahib. The English called him Sardar, later Raja and finally His Highness. On the light side of life he wished to emulate the Mughal Emperors and other notable chiefs. Babar and Humayun each had about two hundred women in their harem. Akbar's seraglio contained over five hundred women. Ranjit Singh's contemporary, Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk of Kabul possessed a harem of six hundred women. Badan Singh, the Jat Raja of Bharatpur, had 150 wives. Muhammad Khan Bangash, Nawab of Farrukhabad in U.P., had two thousand concubines, and lawfully married only one wife. Ranjit Singh was content with eighteen or twenty wives. Most of them lived with their parents visiting Ranjit Singh at his call for a short period in the year. Only Muslim courtesans, Moran and Gul Bahar, were his constant companions as long as they were in early twenties. The other dancing girls were kept to give performance on state occasions, fair and festival days, and to provide entertainment to him as well as to his honoured guests, mainly Englishmen.

Comment

Ranjit Singh is to be judged not by the standards of today, but by those of

his own time, and the contemporary political situation in the country. No man on this earth is perfect.

Kuchh nuqs anar ki latafat men nahin,
gar us men hon gale sare dane chand.
[No savour or delight is lost in the taste,
If a few rotten grains has pomegranate.]

To live with the least possible error is the law for man. To live without error is the dream of an angel. In conformity with the Law of Nature, big rivers make a present of their waters to the great deep in the service of the universe. So does a higher law command man to give away the best in him for the service of the world. Ranjit Singh gave to the Panjab, Jammu and Kashmir what they needed most – peace, power and plenty. At his accession in 1799, his kingdom, politically, militarily and economically, occupied the weakest position in the whole of India. In 1839, at the time of his death, his homeland was the most prosperous and powerful state in Asia including China and Japan. Ranjit Singh won like a hero, lived like a rainbow, and left behind a fame which has never ceased to grow.

O Maharaja! your services to your motherland were great. Beyond capacity of this humble writer to state.

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You gave us peace, power and plenty,
Communal harmony, security and festivity.

Your other contribution was self-respect and national pride,
Secularism and patriotism as a permanent guide.

At your galleps, guns and moves,
The enemy trembled in his shoes.

Why have you been sleeping so long and so far?
Arise, open your eyes, join us our Sarkar!

Do not dilly-dally, mount your Laily[1],
Harangue your youths in a fresh rally.

Rescue Kashmir, Jammu, Panjab, your homeland,
Restore law and order with your wand.

[1]Laily was a horse, not a mare, 16 hand or 11 feet 3 inches in height.

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Control your rebel young men,
Give Soloman's wisdom to them.

O Maharaja! Covert your nationalist[1] Charyari[2] into gem,
Reconcile your *man* and *mausi*[3], A.M. and P.M.[4]

New Delhi Hari Ram Gupta
30 June, 1991

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[1]*Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Isai,*
Yeh charon hain bhai-bhai,
In sab ki ek hai mai,
Ek hi doctor, ek hi dai.

[2]Charyari was a regiment in Ranjit Singh's army, controlled by four fast friends, representing four castes of Hinduism – a Brahman, a Khatri, a Vaish (Hardas Singh Bania) and a Bhangi.

[3]Mother and her real younger sister.

[4]*Suno, suno mera paigham,*
Hind hai subah, Pak hai sham.
(Sun rises in the East and sets in the West.)

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Part One

Campaigns and Conquests

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CHAPTER 1

The Hero and His Ingenuity

The Panjab had three great needs,
A hero could fulfil them indeed;
Each stood in need of the other,
Like a child and its mother.

Upto the close of the eighteenth century Hindus and Muslims had led political, social, economic and cultural life independently of each other. The Sikhs had fallen in with the Hindus. The unity of mankind demanded interdependence of peoples rather than their independent isolation. To establish and enforce this principle of evolution and progress, a hero was needed, who must be a son of the soil.

The Hero

Panjab had been completely devastated by twenty foreign invasions in sixty years (1739-99), as well as by corrupt officials and lawless elements in the population. Between rivers Indus and Ravi as many as 3,756 villages had been destroyed and deserted.

Panjab had three great needs of utmost urgency. The first need was to establish law and order, the second to stop foreign invasions, and the third to develop economic resources.

The historical forces were to produce a hero who was to be an expression of the spirit of his times and an epitome of the country's culture. He was to hold Panjab's soul in his own hands. The hero's success depended on three factors: (a) He must possess a nucleus of power, political, military and financial. (b) He must have a strong social group in the population to support him. (c) He must command a small body of deputies chosen from all classes of population to assist him in

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complete obedience to carry out his wishes.

In the cases of all heroes the natural process in general is that the hero rides on the back of a certain group in his rise to power. When he reaches the top, he becomes independent of it. In order to retain himself at the top position he builds up his interests with other groups, and the original social group is relegated to the background.

Ranjit Singh was the hero of the times. He was a son of Panjab through and through. He was the head of powerful Sukarchakia Misl. He possessed sway over considerable territory, and had a small but efficient army. His financial position was sound. Most of the old sardars were dead. Among younger generation of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus, Ranjit Singh enjoyed the topmost status. The Sikhs and Hindus who were united in those days, gave him full support.

The position of the Muslims was unenviable. The Mughal rule had completely disappeared from the Panjab. The Afghan kings, successors of the Mughals in this province, were inextricably involved in their own civil strife and internecine quarrels. Hence the Muslims in Panjab were sullen and sulky, brooding over their misfortune.

Ranjit Singh took full advantage of this situation. He consolidated his position and rose to power by successfully using the blades of the Sikh Jats, brains of Brahmans and Musalmans, and both brain and brawn of Khatris.

Ancestry

The Dal Khalsa consisted of two divisions or Dals and eleven units or groups called misls, everyone named after its leader, or his native village or region. The Dal was formed on the basis of age. The troops commanded by older leaders were called Budha Dal, and the forces under command of younger leaders were called Taruna Dal. The Budha Dal consisted of six misls, i.e. Ahluwalia, Dallewalia, Faizullahpuria also known as Singhpuria, Karorasinghia, Nishanwala and Shahid. The Taruna Dal comprised five misls, i.e. Bhangi, Kanahya, Nakai, Ramgarhia and Sukarchakia. In a battle five misls formed the right wing as well as the left wing, and one misl served as a reserved force.

Jhanda Singh of the Bhangi Misl had made Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu a tributary. Ranjit Dev having ruled for four decades and a half decided to appoint his successor. He had two sons. The elder, Brij Raj Dev, was a vagabond. The Raja favoured the younger son Dalel Singh. The impudent Brij Raj Dev declared war against his father and called for his aid Charat Singh, founder of the Sukarchakia Misl, and Jai Singh, founder of the

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Kanahya Misl. The Raja was supported by Jhanda Singh Bhangi. Both sides engaged in battle at Udhochak not far from Jammu, in Zafarwal parganah of Sialkot district, in 1774. During the melee Charat Singh was killed by the bursting of his own gun. Jai Singh, finding himself unable to fight single-handed, heavily bribed the bodyguard of Jhanda Singh and got him murdered. Both the parties then retired from the battlefield. Ranjit Dev appointed Brij Raj Dev his successor.

Charat Singh was succeeded by his 10-year-old son Mahan Singh, born in 1764, as head of Sukarchakia Misl. He inherited a large territory. His step-mother, Desan, managed the state affairs. Jai Singh Kanahya became foster father of the lad. Mahan Singh had been married by Charat Singh to the daughter of Jai Singh Man, a member of his own misl, and not a big chief. To strengthen Mahan Singh's position, Jai Singh arranged Mahan Singh's second marriage with Raj Kanwar, daughter of Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind. Badrukhan was Gajpat Singh's home village situated near Jind, where Raj Kanwar lived with her mother. The marriage took place at Badrukhan in 1774.[1] This lady, called Mai Malwain, gave birth to a son named Ranjit Singh. Mahan Singh was at this time nearly 17 years old and Raj Kanwar was about 15 years of age.

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Date of Birth

Ranjit Singh was born on 2nd Maghar Samvat 1837 Bikrami, Wednesday. This date is given by Gian Singh in his *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*. He says he was born on "2nd Maghar, 19 *ghari*, 13 *pal* after sunrise, Tuesday, 1837 Bikrami" (2.40 P.M.). But the definite proof of this date is given by Ranjit Singh himself, who celebrated his birthday on 2nd Maghar every year. Only one entry in court chronicler Sohan Lal Suri's voluminous work in Persian, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh* should suffice:

> On the 2nd Maghar, the auspicious birthday of the Sarkar, *tuladan* was performed and other things were given as *sankalp*. The Raja Kalan, Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Atariwala Sardars, Jawind Singh Mokal, and Wazir Singh of Ranghar Nangal offered 11, 7 and 5 ducats as *Nazar* respectively, and became the recipient of the untold kindness of the Sarkar.

The date 2nd Maghar, 1837 Bikrami is given by various writers equivalent to 2 November or 13 November, 1780. According to Kannu

[1]For further reference see author's *History of the Sikhs*, vol. IV, pp. 188, 305.

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Pillai's *Ephemeris*, the best authority on various eras, 2nd Maghar fell on 13 December, 1780, which is the correct date of Ranjit Singh's birth.

Mahan Singh was investing the fort of Sayyidnagar now called Sayyid Kasran when he received on 10 Maghar, 1837 Bikrami the news of the birth of his son. The same day the fort fell. So he named the baby Ranjit Singh meaning winner of battles or the hero.

Heroes are Nature's sons, they create,
Others are followers, they imitate.

Place of Birth

There has been a controversy about Ranjit Singh's place of birth. It is generally believed that Ranjit Singh was born in his father's home at Gujranwala. This assertion is against facts.

1. A custom prevailing in India since time immemorial is that the girl's parents take her to their home for the delivery of her first child. The reason for this was that girls were married when they were very young in early teens. When expecting their first child they were greatly perturbed at first delivery. In those days there were no maternity homes or hospitals or nurses. Some old women of low social status practised the profession of midwife. Child-birth conducted in inner rooms in insanitary conditions of those times was a question of the girl's life and death. The mother's presence during the closing period of pregnancy and at the time of delivery was a great source of solace and strength to the expectant mother. There seems to be no reason why this old and well-established tradition was not observed in the family of Raja Gajpat Singh. Guru Nanak and his sister Nanaki were born in their mother's house.

2. Mahan Singh was always busy either as a diplomat or soldier. In the course of a decade he had subdued numerous warlike tribal chiefs in the north-west Panjab between the Ravi and the Indus rivers. He was often away from home, and hence the chance of his being present at the time of his wife's delivery was rather remote.

3. Besides there was his barren first wife, the daughter of Jai Singh Man in the home. There was not much harmony between the two wives. The second wife's delivery involved an element of risk.

4. Besides there was a jealous mother-in-law controlling the household.

5. Atar Singh Bhadauria, a notable sardar of the same family to which Raj Kanwar's father belonged, says that "Ranjit Singh was born in Pind Badrukhan".

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6. In 1807, during his second expedition into the Cis-Satluj region, Ranjit Singh, accompanied by his maternal uncle, Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, visited Badrukhan to see his birthplace.

7. Ranjit Singh's birth on 2nd Maghar was received by Mahan Singh on 10 Maghar. He was then carrying on a siege of Sayyidnagar or Sayyid Kasran fort, situated about 180 km from Gujranwala. If Ranjit Singh had been born at Gujranwala, Mahan Singh would have got the news in 3 days. Badrukhan from Sayyidnagar was about 500 km.

Badrukhan to Ludhiana	60 km	
Ludhiana to Amritsar	136 km	
Amritsar to Lahore	55 km	
Lahore to Gujranwala	70 km	
Gujranwala to Sayyidnagar or Sayyid Kasran	180 km	
	501 km	say 500 km

Besides, covering 500 km on horseback the messenger had to cross five rivers without bridges – Satluj, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jehlam. The boatmen did not ply their boats regularly but did so when sufficient number of passengers had gathered, and this took fairly long time. Further the messenger must have visited Durbar Sahib, Amritsar, because it fell almost on his way, to offer homage at Hari Mandar. He must have spent some-time at Gujranwala also. Probably for this reason Mahan Singh got the news eight days later.

8. It is asserted that there is no tablet about Ranjit Singh's birth at Badrukhan. It was a small village and the ruling family had shifted shortly afterwards to Sangrur. Badrukhan village remained an uncared for place.

9. In support of Gujranwala, it is held that there are two plaques in Mahan Singh's mansion in Urdu, Panjabi and English. It is an admitted fact that these plaques were put up by Denzil Ibbetson, author of the first *Census Report*, in 1880, one hundred years later, giving November 2, 1780, as the date of Ranjit Singh's birth, based on hearsay. Both the date and the place, given in the plaques, are wrong.[1]

Childhood

Ranjit Singh was not sent to school to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. He was entrusted to Bhai Bhagu Singh Dharamsalia of

[1]Professor Sita Ram Kohli agrees that Ranjit Singh was born at Badrukhan. Vide his *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Panjabi edition, 1953, p. 35n.

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Gujranwala to learn Gurmukhi. Ranjit Singh spent his time in playing and paid absolutely no heed even to learn the alphabets. In later life as Maharaja he could not distinguish between A and B either in Gurmukhi or in Persian, the two common scripts in the Panjab. During the whole of his life he never tried to sign his name and remained content with affixing his seal. Ali-ud-din says he had his seal in Gurmukhi. He liked equestrian sport, sword and spear, wrestling, riding and shooting, and not books, pen and paper. Captain Wade, the British Political Agent at Ludhiana, recorded on 31 May, 1831, Ranjit Singh's statement that he had fired 20,000 bullets left by his father in store at Gujranwala, for practice on targets at the age of 10 or 11. Besides he developed the deepest love for riding fine horses. In fact those were not the days for academic achievement. A scholar of Gurmukhi could get a job only of a *granthi* in a gurdwara. As regards scholars of Persian, a proverb says:

Parhen Farsi bechen Tel,
Yeh dekho Qudrat ke khel.
(Just see nature's miraculous deed,
Persian scholars sell oil in need.)

At Jammu caught Smallpox

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Mahan Singh sacked Jammu[1] for the second time in 1786. The six-year old Ranjit Singh was with him. The child contracted smallpox with high fever at Jammu. Mahan Singh immediately returned to Gujranwala. Rich presents were sent to the temples of Jawalamukhi and Kangra. Charities were liberally distributed among Brahmans, faqirs and the poor. Offerings were made at the temple of Sitla Devi or the goddess of smallpox. Recitations from the holy *Granth*, Hindu *Shastras* and the *Quran* were kept up continuously day and night. After twentyone days Ranjit Singh got rid of fever, but his eyes remained closed for many more days. Later it was discovered that his left eye has lost sight.

Marriage with Mahtab Kaur, 1786

In the battle of Randpura near Batala between Jai Singh Kanahya and Mahan Singh Sukarchakia in 1785, Jai Singh's eldest and ablest son, Gurbakhsh Singh, was killed. He left behind his widow, Sada Kanwar or Kaur and a little daughter, Mahtab Kaur. Mahan Singh was at that time the rising star among all the Sikh chiefs. Sada Kaur was a farsighted lady, and

[1]For details see author's *History of the Sikhs*, vol. IV, pp. 369, 371.

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had much of statesmanship in her. In one year's time she forgot the enmity existing between the Kanahya and Sukarchakia Misls. She secured the approval of her father-in-law, Jai Singh Kanahya, to cement an alliance between the two discordant families by offering Mahtab Kaur in marriage to Ranjit Singh.

Sada Kaur learnt that Mahan Singh's wife Raj Kanwar had gone to Jawalamukhi[1] on a pilgrimage for the recovery of Ranjit Singh from smallpox. Sada Kaur immediately went there and persuaded her to accept her daughter for Ranji Singh. On Ranjit Singh's recuperation, Mahan Singh held a grand feast at Gujranwala. Jai Singh Kanahya attended it, and made a formal proposal for a matrimonial alliance between the two houses. The betrothal and marriage in 1786 cost Sada Kaur about one lakh of rupees.

Narrow Escape

In 1790, Mahan Singh had laid siege to the fort of Manchar. The 10-year-old Ranjit Singh accompanied him into the battlefield on a separate elephant. Ranjit Singh in the howdah was attended by a brave soldier. He was roaming about in the field. At one place he halted. Hashmat Khan Chatha Pathan, uncle of the chief of Manchar, saw the child, separated from his troops. He quietly drew his horse near the tail of elephant and got on its back. He drew out his sword to attack Ranjit, when his companion sprang upon the Pathan and in an instant cut off his head, and thus miraculously saved his ward.

Boyhood and the Domestic Tangle

Mahan Singh died at the young age of twenty-six in 1790, when Ranjit Singh had not yet completed ten years of his life. After the death of Mahan Singh, the affairs of the misl were managed by Ranjit Singh's mother. She was a young lady of twenty-four then. She was assisted by Mahan Singh's two trusted officers, Diwan Lakhpat Rae Khatri of Naushahra and Missar Laiq Ram. The Diwan attended to administrative duties, collected revenues and realized tributes. The Missar managed the household affairs. Sada Kaur also lent a hand occasionally when she

[1]It is situated at the foot of a hill and has a paved bazar. A small canal flows into the temple and the town. It was constructed by Akbar. The temple is situated at a height of 1958 feet. The main temple has fire flames getting out of holes, shelves and pits in the wall. Numerous temples and shrines surrounded the main temple. Akbar on a visit had offered a gold umbrella to the temple, and covered the whole dome with gold plates. There were numerous springs of water.

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visited Gujranwala. The over-all authority was exercised by Mahan Singh's maternal uncle, Dal Singh, chief of Akalgarh.

The old chief and Sada Kaur did not like Raj Kanwar's supremacy. He accused her of having secret intimacy with her two officers. Sada Kaur was a very ambitious lady. She wished to control two misls, Kanahya and Sukarchakia. Dal Singh and Sada Kaur decided to get rid of the princess. They lured Ranjit Singh to become the head of the misl, and he gave tacit assent to their plot. The poor and innocent Raj Kanwar was poisoned to death by Dal Singh.

Some writers accuse Ranjit Singh of having killed his mother with his own hands. Prinsep says Ranjit Singh approved or at least connived at the conspiracy and Dal Singh poisoned her. Khushwaqt Rae, Sohan Lal, Amar Nath and Bute Shah do not mention this event. Khushwaqt Rae wrote his book in 1811, and he was not in Ranjit Singh's service. Bute Shah was an employee of the British Government at Ludhiana. He says that Ranjit Singh took charge of the misl in consultation with his mother. Sir Lepel Griffin writes: "The lady disappeared; according to one report her son killed her with his own hands; according to another, he caused poison to be administered to her. But these stories are opposed to what we know of his character, which was singularly averse to deeds of violence except in fair fight; nor had he any respect for female virtue or fidelity." N.K. Sinha says the story is based on "mere gossip." Sita Ram Kohli considers the charge entirely false and baseless. In our view by any stretch of imagination Ranjit Singh cannot be called a matricide. The story is purely malicious and absolutely unfair and unjust.

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The Cap and Turban Affair at Jammu, 1793

Jammu was paying tribute to Sukarchakia Misl. After Mahan Singh's death no tribute had been received. Dal Singh took Ranjit Singh to Jammu as head of the misl. Brijraj Dev's minor son Sampuran Singh, a lad of 12 or 13, was the Raja of Jammu. Mian Mota, a member of the ruling family, was his guardian.

Both the chiefs were of the same age. No sooner did the two boys meet than they began to play. During the game Ranjit Singh pulled off the cap of Sampuran Singh who immediately retaliated by throwing off the turban of Ranjit Singh. It created a critical situation. The elderly people on both sides brought about a reconciliation between the rulers. Ranjit Singh was offered rich gifts. Sampuran Singh died of smallpox in 1797. Ranjit Dev's nephew Chait Singh succeeded him.

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Ranjit Singh's Resources on the Eve of Shah Zaman's Invasion, 1793

In 1793 with the invasion of Shah Zaman, the king of Kabul, grandson of the celebrated Ahmad Shah Durrani, the last phase of foreign invasions began from the north-west. The British Resident at Lucknow deputed an intelligence official, Ghulam Sarwar, to report on the state of affairs in the Panjab and at Kabul. He passed across the Panjab in 1793 on his way to Kabul and back again in 1795. His account was compared with other sources of information, and was certified to be authentic by the Governor-General. The original papers of Ghulam Sarwar in Persian with the exception of one could not be traced in the National Archives of India, New Delhi; but their translation into English was available. The translator could not correctly decipher the names of various places in the Panjab.

Another important source of information is *Tarikh-e-Husain Shahi.* Its author, Sayyid Imam-ud-din Husaini, another spy of the British Government, stayed in Panjab in the last quarter of 1796, and returned to Lucknow by the end of 1798. Both these accounts confirm that Ranjit Singh, though only thirteen years of age, was the most powerful Sikh chief in Panjab territory. In 1793 his domain yielded him an annual revenue of thirty lakhs of rupees. It consisted of the following parganahs:

1. Chiniot, 62 km from Sargodha.
2. Dhanni Gheb. The author of *Husain Shahi* wrote in 1796:

> Dhanni Gheb-Revenue is realized by Khataks. The subjects and nobles of this territory are all Musalmans. They keep this country under their control by the sword. Whenever a Sikh force comes to fight them, they pay tribute. The chief of these people is called Raja Mahndi.

3. Dinga, 24 km from Lala Musa. Khudadad Khan Khattar was the local chief. He had 3,000 horse and 1,700 foot in his service.
4. Eminabad, 56 km north of Lahore.
5. Ghonowal, near Dera Baba Nanak on the Ravi.
6. Gojra, 58 km from Shorkot.
7. Gujranwala, 69 km north of Lahore.
8. Pind Dadan Khan, 19 km from Malakwal. Imam-ud-din Husaini wrote:

> Pind Dadar (Dadan) Khan is under the Sikhs. The income from salt amounts to two and a half lakhs of rupees annually. In Mughal times the income was greater. Ranjit Singh, son of Mahan Singh, is the best

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of all Sikh chiefs of neighbourhood. He has the fort, the city and the salt mines in his possession. In this Doab (Sind Sagar Doab between the Indus and River Jehlam) there are about 6,000 Sikh horse, and nearly the same number of foot.

9. Rasulnagar, renamed Ramnagar, on the Chenab.
10. Rohtas.
11. Sahiwal, 166 km from Lahore.
12. Besides, the Raja of Jammu was under his suzerainty.

Forts

Ranjit Singh possessed eighteen strongholds of note in addition to many petty forts.

1. Ahmadnagar, 20 km south-west of Wazirabad. It was made of mud, but was strong and had no guns.

2. Alipur Chatha, 37 km from Wazirabad. It was built of mud, but was very strong and had no guns.

3. Bhoom (Bhaun, 11 km from Chakwal in Jehlam district). It was made of mud, was of middling size, and had no guns.

4. Dadan (Pind Dadan Khan). It was mud-built, large, strong and had two guns mounted.

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5. Dulloor (Dinpur, on the borders of Jammu and Sialkot district). It was built of stone, stood on an eminence and was large in size, it had four small guns mounted.

6. Gheb (Pindi Gheb) in Rawalpindi district. It was made of stone and mud. It had no gun.

7. Ghose (Chot?, 16 km south of Pind Dadan Khan). It was built of stone, stood on a hill, was of middling size, and had no guns.

8. Gohar (Gojra?, 58 km from Shorkot). It was built of mud, of middling size and had no guns.

9. Gujranwala, 69 km north of Lahore. It was made of mud. It mounted eight guns. Its circumference was 3 km. A few members of Ranjit Singh's family resided in this fort.

10. Jirgwaun (Chakwal?, west of Jehlam). It was made of mud, of middling size and was without guns.

11. Kunjah, 12 km west of Gujrat. It was made of bricks and mounted two guns.

12. Manchar Chatha, 33 km from Wazirabad. It was mud-built. It was very strong, but was left neglected. (*Mahan Singh Manchar marya hath pothi phar ke.*)

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13. Rasulnagar, renamed Ramnagar on the Chenab. It had a strong fort capable of resisting a siege, though it was made of mud. Eight guns were mounted on its walls. Its circumference was 3 km. It had four large and three small gateways. Some of the members of Ranjit Singh's family resided there.

14. Rasulpur, 32 km west of Gujrat. It was a mud fort. It was strong and of middling size.

15. Rohtas, 20 km from Jehlam. It was constructed of stone and was situated on a hill. Its circumference was about 12 km. It had no guns. The fort had twelve gateways.

16. Sayyidnagar or Sayyid Kasran, 28 km from Chakwal in Jehlam district. It was mud-built, but strong enough to sustain a siege. Four guns were mounted on it. Its circumference was about 3 km. It had two large and two small gateways.

17. Sungooy or Sanghoi Khas, 13 km south of Jehlam on the western bank of the river. It was made of mud, was of middling size, and had no guns.

18. Wazirabad, 32 km north of Gujranwala. It had a brick-built fort, and had no guns.

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Army

As regards his army Ranjit Singh had a force of 1,200 horse and 2,000 foot in permanent employment. In case of an emergency he could raise 11,000 horse and 6,000 foot. Dal Singh was his commander-in-chief, Gulab Khan Afghan commanded the Najib Battalion of 1,000 foot. Ghaus Khan was the Darogha of Topkhana, and commanded 1,000 Afghan infantry with six guns.

Besides the following feudal chiefs could supply him contingents varying in strength: Ahmad Khan Afghan with 1,000 horse, Fatah Khan Afghan, 100 horse, Fatah Singh Dhari, 1,000 horse, Joti Singh, 1,000 horse, and Laiq Missar, 100 horse.

The Boy Chief's Modus Operandi during Shah Zaman's Four Invasions, 1793-99

Shah Zaman's first invasion took place from December, 1793 to March, 1794. The Shah halted at Peshawar. His advance-guard of 5,000 crossed the Indus at Attock, and marched upto Hasan Abdal. After a sharp skirmish with Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi it returned to Peshawar. Shah Zaman travelled along the western bank of River Indus and marching through the Trans-Indus territory retired to Kabul. Ranjit

Singh did not come into contact with the Shah at this time, though he was present at Pind Dadan Khan to watch the Shah's movements.

Shah Zaman's second invasion occurred in November-December, 1795. The Shah advanced upto Hasan Abdal 53 km east of Attock. His general, Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi, marched about 200 km from Attock to Rohtas which belonged to Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh withdrew his men without any fighting. He retired to Pind Dadan Khan along with other Sikhs. A body of Afghans attacked them. Ranjit Singh and other Sikh sardars crossed the River Jehlam and gathered on its southern bank. Ranjit Singh sent his messengers to Daulat Rao Sindhia, master of Delhi-Agra-Gwalior region, at Aligarh, inviting him to join the Sikhs in expelling the Afghan invader. There was no encouraging response from the Maratha chief. On hearing the news of a revolt at Herat, Shah Zaman retreated homeward, and reached Peshawar on 3 January, 1796.

Shah Zaman again invaded Panjab for the third time in October, 1796. He halted at Peshawar for about a month. Ranjit Singh lay encamped on the southern bank of River Jehlam with 10,000 men. He had sent his womenfolk with cash and jewellery to Patiala. On the advance of the Shah, Ranjit Singh's men evacuated Rohtas fort and joined him. He retired to Pind Dadan Khan. From there he shifted his camp to Miani. Ranjit Singh at the head of a strong contingent forded the River Jehlam, delivered a surprise attack on the Durrani troops at Pind Dadan Khan and hurriedly recrossed the river.

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From Serae Pakka Shah Zaman addressed a letter to Ranjit Singh asking him not to obstruct his passage. Ranjit Singh replied that he was ready to fight as "through the grace of Guru every Sikh was bound to be victorious". The Durrani advance-guard crossed the Jehlam and encamped at Kharian. Ranjit Singh and other sardars gathered on the southern bank of River Chenab.

On 31 December, 1796, Sher Muhammad Khan Wazir at the head of 12,000 troops entered Lahore. Shah Zaman reached Lahore on 1 January, 1797. The Sikhs retired to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh at the head of 9,000 troops lay encamped to the north of Amritsar. On 11 January, 1797, a detachment of the Durrani army attacked Amritsar. The Sikhs repulsed it inflicting heavy loss. The main Afghan army under Shah Zaman arrived at Amritsar on 12 January. The Shah was defeated and he was pursued to the very walls of Lahore.

On 13 January, Ranjit Singh wrote to Sahib Singh of Patiala to join them against the invader. He never sent a reply. Shahamat Ali wrote:

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About this period the famous Ranjit Singh brought himself into notice by his bold irruptions. He had at this time a party of eight or nine hundred horse under his command and carried on depredations around the royal camp with remarkable impunity. Such was the negligence and idleness of the king's army that no one could arrest his movement.

Shah Zaman retired from Lahore and reached Peshawar on 25 February, 1797.

Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi Slain, 29 April, 1797

While leaving the Panjab Shah Zaman left General Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi at Rohtas to keep a watch on the Sikhs. He was given 7,000 troops, 100 pieces of camel artillery, 4 guns and two lakhs of rupees. Ranjit Singh and other sardars engaged him in a fight and killed him on 29 April, 1797.[1]

Death of Diwan Lakhpat Rae and Flight of Missar Laiq Ram, 1797

The death of Shahanchibashi encouraged Ranjit Singh to realize arrears of tribute from the Muslim chiefs under his suzerainty. In 1797 after harvesting time Ranjit Singh deputed Diwan Lakhpat Rae to restore his authority over Pindi Gheb, saltmines and Makhad upto River Indus. The Diwan punished the rebels and realized tributes and revenues from them. While returning he visited the sacred place of Katas Raj. A Mulsim fanatic employed by the tribal chiefs engaged the Diwan in discussion, took out his hidden dagger and thrust it into the mouth of the Diwan and killed him. His servants immediately caught hold of the assassin and cut him to pieces. His dead body was burnt over a heap of dry grass and wood. The Diwan's corpse was washed in the holy water of Katas and cremated with solemn ceremony. Prinsep says that Dal Singh "had long borne illwill to the Diwan" and he with the connivance of Ranjit Singh got him murdered. Hugel, Cunningham and Ali-ud-din accepted Prinsep's version and involved Ranjit Singh in the Diwan's murder. Ranjit Singh had no motive to get rid of him. Missar Laiq Ram was frightened. He sought Sada Kaur's advice. She gave him money and sent him to Hardwar, advising him never to return to Panjab. It leads us to believe that Sada Kaur also was in league with Dal Singh. Both wanted to get rid of these two able administrators so that Ranjit Singh should

[1] For details see author's *History of the Sikhs*, vol. IV.

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depend for advice on Dal Singh and Sada Kaur. Prinsep's allegation that Ranjit Singh was responsible for the death of Diwan Lakhpat Rae four years after the death of his mother does not appear plausible. Lakhpat Rae's death was the result of a conspiracy hatched by the rebel chiefs who had been subdued by him.

The Fourth and Last Foreign Invasion, 1798-99

Shah Zaman led his fourth campaign in the Panjab in September, 1798. Ranjit Singh was at Pind Dadan Khan and his military strength was 15,000. On hearing that Shah Zaman had crossed the River Indus at Attock on 19 October, 1798, Ranjit Singh hurried back to Ramnagar on the banks of the River Chenab. The Shah arrived at Gujrat on 18 November, and Ranjit Singh fell back towards Lahore. The Muslim zamindars of Shahdara, opposite Lahore, invited Nizam-ud-din, the Afghan chief of Kasur, to take possession of the forts evacuated by Sikhs. He arrived there at the head of 400 horse on 18 November. Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh of Gujrat attacked Nizam-ud-din with 500 horse. Nizam-ud-din received a shot in the leg and fell off his horse. He was immediately removed from the battlefield and he regained consciousness in two hours. Fifty Afghans and 20 Sikhs lost their lives in this action.

On 19 November, 1798, Wazir Wafadar Khan was near Wazirabad. Ranjit Singh with three sardars attacked him and plundered his baggage. Other Sikh sardars lay encamped at Amritsar. Bibi Sada Kaur was also there. Ranjit Singh invited the sardars from Amritsar to join him. They gave no reply. Sada Kaur reproached them, saying: "If you are disposed to assist Ranjit Singh, advance and join him, if not, throw off that dress and take mine; give me your clothes and I will march against the enemy".

Ranjit Singh himself came to Amritsar and said to the Sikh sardars: "Victory is the gift of God. Let us make an effort to oppose the invader".

On 24 November Shah Zaman sent a detachment of 10,000 troops to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh at the head of 500 horse were patrolling the Lahore road about 13 km from Amritsar. They sighted the Afghans and instantly engaged their advancing party in a bloody fight. Meanwhile some sardars from Amritsar with 2,000 men joined them. About 500 men were killed on each side, and the Afghans were driven back to Lahore.

On 29 November Ranjit Singh and others at the head of 10,000 horse marched towards Lahore. Sada Kaur with 1,000 troops remained at Amritsar to guard it. Shah Zaman entered Lahore on 30 November, 1798. He was informed that Dal Singh, maternal uncle of Ranjit Singh's

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father, had plundered his 2,000 camels laden with fresh and dry fruits in the village of Talwandi Musa Khan, 11 km north-east of Gujranwala. He had also captured 50 horses, 70 camles, 16 mules, and many shawls.

Ranjit Singh at the head of 400 horse attacked a body of troops of Nizam-ud-din of Kasur at Kot Lakhpat, 15 km from Lahore. "Although almost all of them were wounded on this occasion, they did not allow the Sikhs to possess themselves of the forage. The skirmish continued till after sunset, when Ranjit Singh was compelled by the darkness to retreat," wrote Shahamat Ali. On 21 December, 1798, Ranjit Singh and Dal Singh fought with a Durrani contingent.

Shah Zaman's prime minister, Wafadar Khan, sent an agent Neki Singh to Amritsar on 22 December, 1798, to negotiate with the Sikhs for peace. Neki Singh gave on behalf of the Shah on 25 December, 1798, two pairs of shawls and three *sarpeches* to Ranjit Singh and one pair of shawls to Tara Singh Ghaiba. These chiefs gave to Neki Singh for the Shah seven bows and seven quivers full of fine arrows. At the time of the departure of Neki Singh, Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh Bhangi granted *khilats* and Rs. 500 in cash to Neki Singh. Ghasi Singh on the part of Sahib Singh Bhangi and Mohan Singh on the part of Ranjit Singh accompanied Neki Singh to Lahore. They told Neki Singh that they were prepared to return all the booty captured from Shah's troops if they were favoured. In a private meeting "Ranjit Singh told Neki Singh if the Shah would appoint him to the charge of the Fort of Lahore, he would pay one lakh of rupees as *nazarana*".

Neki Singh left Amritsar on 28 December accompanied by Sikh vakils. Dal Singh, Ranjit Singh's grand uncle, came to see him off for 10 km from Amritsar. This party was received 15 km from Lahore by a notable sardar of the Shah at the head of 1,000 horse. The Wazir granted interviews to the Sikh vakils in the afternoon on 29 December, 1798. They were shown special marks of favour.

The same day some Nakai Sikhs gathered at Chunian. At Nizam-ud-din's request, the Shah sent a Durrani force against them. After a desperate engagement the Sikhs were dispersed. In another incident two Sikh chiefs while foraging fell into the hands of the Durranis near Lahore in the afternoon on 29 December, 1798. "Their hair was cut off, and they were dismissed after having been made Musalmans".

Ranjit Singh was enraged on hearing of both these incidents. He took 1,000 choice horse and set out on the road to Lahore to retaliate upon the Durranis. He was followed by Chait Singh and Sahib Singh with 2,000 horse. Dal Singh persuaded these chiefs to return saying it was improper

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to commit any depredation before the return of their vakils from the Shah, Ranjit Singh at the head of a small contingent came to Lahore. He reached the fort at night. The Shah was staying in the Saman Burj of the fort, Ranjit Singh stood below the Burj and shouted: "Oh grandson of Ahmad Shah! come down and have a bout with the grandson of Charat Singh."

The Sikh vakils from Amritsar were admitted to several interviews with the Wazir. They were given a regular allowance of ghi, sugar, rice, goats, etc.

The British Diplomacy

The Governor-General at Calcutta was getting almost daily news of Shah Zaman's activities through a band of secret agents who were present in the camps of the Shah and the Sikhs. He was perturbed at the Sikh dissension in repelling the Shah. He did not like that the Shah should advance beyond Lahore. The Governor-General resorted to diplomacy to bring about the failure of Shah Zaman's invasion of the Panjab, and in that object he admirably succeeded.

When Shah Zaman started from Kabul, Duncan, Governor of Bombay, under instructions of Lord Wellesley the Governor-General, sent an Irani, Mahdi Ali Khan, of notorious character, then living in Bombay, to Tehran. At his instigation, Fatah Ali Shah, the King of Iran, invaded Khorasan, a province of Afghanistan, and advanced up to Sabzawar, about 1,000 km from Kabul. Further Mahdi Ali Khan incited Prince Mahmud of Herat to raise the standard of rebellion against Shah Zaman. Mahdi Ali Khan was rewarded with three lakhs of rupees.

Leniency towards the Sikhs

This news reached Shah Zaman on 3 January, 1799, and he immediately broke up his camp at Lahore. The Shah granted an interview to the Sikh vakils, saying: "It is well. I leave this country to you free from assessment (*muaf*); continue to occupy and cultivate it with confidence." He bestowed a *doshala* upon everyone of them, and permitted them to depart.

Ranjit Singh's Soft Attitude towards Shah Zaman, 1799

The Sikh sardars followed the Shah at a short distance in the rear. Ranjit Singh despatched his agents in advance to Gujranwala to collect foodstuff and other necessary supplies. When the Shah reached Gujranwala, Ranjit Singh's men delivered all those articles of food and

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fodder to the Shah. The Sikh sardars planned to harass the Shah while he was crossing the river Chenab. Ranjit Singh, Dal Singh and Budh Singh prevented them saying that the Sikh religion did not permit attacking a retiring enemy. The Shah and most of his troops crossed the rivers Chenab and Jehlam safely. His guns were lying in the dry sandy bed on the eastern bank of river Jehlam ready to be transported in boats the following morning. There had been torrential rains both in the hills and the plains. The river was suddenly flooded in the night. The guns were swept away to the mid current.

Shah Zaman without guns reached Peshawar on 30 January, 1799. From there he sent a *maraslah* under his own signatures (*dastkhat khas*) to Ranjit Singh asking him to extricate his twelve guns from river Jehlam as soon as possible and send them to him at Peshawar and he would be granted governorship of Lahore province. (*Subahdari saltanat Lahore bashuma Marahmat farmudah bashad.*)

As the guns were badly needed to suppress the disturbances in Afghanistan, the Shah waited for them at Peshawar for six weeks. Prinsep says that the Shah held out "the hope, that his known wishes in respect to Lahore, might be complied with, if the duty were well performed".

Ranjit Singh could drag out eight guns in the beginning of March, 1799, and sent them to the Shah at Peshawar, explaining that the remaining four guns were lying in deeper waters under a very strong current, and could not be taken out.[1] The Shah was pleased. He sent a *khilat* for Ranjit Singh, in recognition of his service, with a *firman* permitting him to capture Lahore.[2] The Shah left Peshawar on 13 March, and reached Kabul on 17 March, 1799.[3]

It was clear to every discerning eye that Ranjit Singh was the rising star on the political firmament of the Panjab. He possessed the keen sense of rightly observing men and matters. He could threaten, defy, challenge, fight, coax, cajole and serve Shah Zaman, the cynosure of all the Muslims of Northern India. Though he was the youngest chief still in his teens, he had established his supreme position even above the octogenarian Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Tara Singh Ghaiba aged above 90 years, the only survivors of the great misl periods. In diplomacy his superiority was well

[1]The remaining four guns, one of iron and three of brass, were recovered in 1823, and were kept in his own personal arsenal.

[2]Diwan Amar Nath confirms the receipt of *khilat* by Ranjit Singh from Shah Zaman for the possession of Lahore.

[3]NAI, *Political Proceedings*, 25 January, 1799, no. 28; 28 January, no.16; 10 May, no.7; *Sindhia's Affairs*, 1794-99, J. Collins to the Governor-General.

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known. He claimed equality with Daulat Rao Sindhia, master of Delhi, and protector of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. Indeed Ranjit Singh was marked by Nature to be the first ruler of independent Panjab after eight hundred years.

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CHAPTER 2

Lord of Lahore

Lahore was entire Panjab's heart,
It needed a chief just and smart,
In politics Ranjit kept religion apart,
Thereby he won all people's heart.

Political Condition of the Panjab in 1799

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In 1799 between the Indus and the Satluj there were 68 territories quite independent of one another. They consisted of 25 Muslim states, 27 Hindu states and 16 Sikh states.

The Muslim States

(a) *Directly under the Kabul government:* Kashmir, Peshawar and Multan.

(b) *Owing allegiance to Kabul:* Kasur, Bahawalpur, Malerkotla and Kunjpura.

(c) *Under Panjabi Muslim Chiefs and Tributary to Kabul:* Awans of Pind Dadan Khan and Sahiwal, Baluch of Khushab, converted Bamba Kakka tribes of Muzaffarabad, Nawab of Bhakkar, Leiah and Mankerah, Chatha Pathans of Rasulnagar, Gakhars of Jehlam-Rawalpindi region, Pirzadas of Pakpattan, Sials of Jhang and Tiwana Malaks of Shahpur.

(d) *Hill States.*

(e) *Jammu group:* Akhnur, Bhimbar, Khari Khariali, Kishtwar, Kotli, Punchh, Rajauri, Riasi.

(f) *Kangra group:* Shahpur.

The Hindu States

(a) *The Jammu group between rivers Chenab and Ravi:* Bahu, Basohli,

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Bahandralta (later called Ramnagar), Bhadrawah, Bhoti, Chaneni, Dalpatpur, Jammu, Jasrota, Lakhanpur, Mankot (now called Ramkot), Sanba, Trikot.

(b) *The Kangra group between rivers Ravi and Satluj:* Bhadu, Bhangal, Chamba, Datarpur, Guler (also called Haripur), Jaswan, Kangra, Kotila, Kulu, Kutlehar, Mandi, Nurpur, Siba, Suket.

The Notable Sikh Sardars in 1799

Ghulam Sarwar and Imam-ud-din Husaini who travelled right across Panjab in nineties and James Browne in 1788, mention the following leading Sikh sardars:

1. Milkha Singh Bhangi Pindiwala. He was prominent in the region between the Indus and the Jehlam. His wife supervised the area between Attock and Hasan Abdal. Ranjit Singh called him *Baba* or grandfather.
2. Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat. His territory yielded 13 lakhs annually. He owned 12 forts. He was married to the sister of Ranjit Singh's father.
3. Jodh Singh Bhangi of Wazirabad. He possessed about 500 villages. He was married to the daughter of Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat.
4. Jassa Singh Bhangi of Chiniot. His territory lay along River Chenab and yielded 14 lakhs annually.
5. Ranjit Singh Sukarchakia who dominated large parts of Sind Sagar Doab, Chaj Doab and Rachna Doab, the country lying between the rivers Indus and Ravi.
6. Karam Singh Bhangi of Jassarwal in Sialkot district. His annual income was about 8 lakhs.
7. Sudh Singh Bhangi of Doda in Shakargarh tahsil of Sialkot district.
8. Chait Singh Bhangi possessed the city and the fort of Lahore.
9. Gulab Singh Bhangi of Amritsar brought Kasur under submission and levied tribute. He possessed the famous Zamzama gun.
10. Sada Kaur Kanahya was the widow of Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh, founder of the Kanahya Misl. She lost her husband in 1785, and father-in-law in 1793, when she became the head of the misl. Her territory included Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Kangra, Atalgarh, Dasuya, Mukerian and Batala.
11. Jaimal Singh Kanahya of Kalanaur. He was married to the celebrated princess Sahib Kaur of Patiala.
12. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, 1723-1803. He was the founder of Ramgarhia Misl. His territory lay in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur,

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Hoshiarpur and Kangra and yielded about 15 lakhs annually.

13. Baghel Singh Karorasinghia possessed Sirhali, Tarn Taran, Hariana, Mahalpur and Sham Chaurasi.

14. Tara Singh Ghaiba Dallewalia, 1710-1807. His territory was situated on both sides of River Satluj. In the Jalandhar Doab he owned Nakodar, Dakhni, Nawanshahar Doaba, Phillaur and Rahon.

15. Budh Singh Singhpuria held Jalandhar.

16. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala almost equalled Ranjit Singh in political, military and financial resources.

Observations of the Author of Husain Shahi in 1796:

> In the country of the Panjab from the Indus to the banks of the Yamuna there are thousands of Sikh chiefs. None obeys the other. If a person owns two or three horses, he boasts of being a chief, and gets ready to fight against thousands. When a village is besieged by the Sikhs to realize tribute which the zamindars cannot afford, they intrigue with other Sikhs; and the Sikhs begin to fight among themselves. Whoever wins receives money according to the capacity of the villagers.

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Piteous Plight of the Panjab in 1799

In 1799 when Ranjit Singh was on the verge of bringing Panjab under his sway it was in a state of disintegration. There was no central government. The destruction wrought by fire and sword was visible everywhere. We are told by an eyewitness, James Skinner, that "so reduced was the actual number of human beings, and so utterly cowed their spirits, that the few villages that did continue to exist, at great intervals, had scarcely any communication with one other; and so great was the increase of beasts of prey that the little communication that remained was often cut off by a single tiger known to haunt the roads."

End of Transitory Period

The Sikh misls had served their purpose. From the point of extension of Sikh power the system had worked well for a generation. The Sikh territory had spread in the northwest as far as Attock on the Indus and in the east upto western banks of the Ganga. Their predatory excursions had extended up to Jammu on the north, to Multan in the south-west, to Garhwal and Rohilkhand across River Ganga and on the south-east as far as Mughal Serae.

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But soon afterwards the misls fell a prey to mutual rivalry and jealousy ending in anarchy. It must have been a dreary time for the peace-loving people, when the trader and the peasant had to arm themselves, when even women received training in the use of weapons of war, when battles were fought to settle the boundaries of villages, when human blood was shed for the disputed possession of the borders of a field, and when men were killed in retaliation for plundered cattle.

That such a state of disorder had lasted so long was obviously due to the absence of a ruler who, by a combination of political insight, physical valour, and of thoughtful planning with resolute execution, could unify the heterogeneous material.

The time was ripe for the arrival of a strong monarch. The prescient eye of the traveller George Foster in 1783, shortly after the birth of Ranjit Singh could foreshadow this change:

> Should any future cause call forth the combined efforts of the Sicques to maintain the existence of empire and religion, we may see some ambitious chief led on by his genius and success, and, absorbing the power of his associates, display, from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy. The page of history is filled with the like effects, springing from the like causes. Under such a form of government, I have little hesitation to saying, that the Sicques would be soon advanced to the first rank amongst the natives of Hindostan, and should become a terror to the surrounding states.

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On the Way to Kingship

Mahan Singh had seen how his father-in-law, Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind, along with other Phulkian chiefs of Patiala and Nabha, had given up the feudalistic confederated system, and had established his individualistic state independent of Sikh misls, on the model of Delhi kingdom under which they were placed. Mahan Singh began to follow up their example. All the chiefs serving under him were treated by him not as his equals as was the rule in the misls, but as his subordinates. They were given fixed salaries with occasional rewards by way of appreciation for some deeds of extraordinary nature. The entire booty, tributes, revenues, *rakhis* and fines, went into the state treasury, and they were not distributed among his officers. In this way he had set up a petty kingdom of his own.

Ranjit Singh inherited this patrimony. Though he was a boy still in his teens, yet he possessed great ability, strong resolution, consummate

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leadership, profound shrewdness, penetrating foresight and unlimited ambition. He was not content with his petty domain; he wanted a kingdom. The Sikh sardars had been ruling independently over small territories. Ranjit Singh resolved to unite all of them into a single, unified system of statecraft. During Shah Zaman's invasions of the Panjab he had seen that he alone was considered the most powerful chief. He took it upon himself to establish a kingdom. The Sikh sardars of the misls led an abstemious life at home and abroad. Ranjit Singh decided to change their simple and frugal life to the magnificence of the Mughal court.

The first step in achieving this objective was to seize the provincial capital, Lahore, because its possession would give him supremacy over all the rest. It was for this reason that he was not averse to submit to Shah Zaman in December, 1798 when he had offered to pay a tribute of one lakh of rupees to the Shah for the governorship of the fort of Lahore at the time of its evacuation by him. This was undoubtedly the shortest road to the goal; but it did not materialise. The Shah might have thought that by planting Ranjit Singh in Lahore he would lose his authority over Panjab for good. Had it not been for this fear, the Shah would have accepted a sum of one lakh of rupees as he was hard-pressed for money, or perhaps he might have struck a bargain with Ranjit Singh for a larger amount.

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Ranjit Sing's hospitable behaviour during the last stage of his campaign and in the course of his return journey had considerably softened the Shah's attitude towards Ranjit Singh. Due to it he had promised him the governorship of Lahore on the receipt of his guns. This letter of authority giving him permission to seize Lahore from three Sikh sardars could enable Ranjit Singh to secure the support of the Muslim nobility of the capital.

The City

Lahore was then in the hands of the triumvirate Sikh chiefs – Sahib Singh (son of Gujar Singh), Chait Singh (son of Lahna Singh), and Mohar Singh (son of Sobha Singh). Sahib Singh was married to the sister of Mahan Singh, father of Ranjit Singh. He generally resided at Gujrat and was a supporter of Ranjit Singh. Disagreement prevailed between the two remaining chiefs who frequently resorted to fighting, and in consequence the people suffered. Prinsep says they were "profligate and debauched", and their administration was "most unpopular." A report dated 24 December 1798, stated, "They commit great oppression on the inhabitants of the city."

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Lahore was situated in the heart of Panjab. It lay about 500 km from Delhi on the east, nearly at the same distance from the Khyber Pass in the west as well as from the northern borders of Sind in the south and Kashmir on the north. It had a brick wall 10 metres high around it, fortified by numerous bastions and towers, with thirteen gates and a deep and wide moat. The fort stood on an eminence commanding a majestic view. A branch of Ali Mardan Khan's canal flowed by its gates.

Nizam-ud-din Khan

Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur was keen to possess Lahore. During Shah Zaman's invasion he had requested the Shah to instal him in its possession. The Shah knew that he would not be able to hold it even for a day after his departure, and so he did not agree. Nizam-ud-din sounded the notable Muslim leaders who promised to assist him. No sooner did the Shah cross the Ravi than both the Sikh chiefs of Lahore entered the city and established their rule. Nizam-ud-din delivered an attack on the capital, but he was repulsed.

The Invitation

Mian Muhmmad Ashiq and Mehar Mohkam-ud-din of Nawankot were the principal Chaudhris of Lahore. They were rich and influential, and no important matter concerning the city or its neighbourhood could be amicably settled without a reference to them.

The daughter of Mian Muhammad Ashiq was married to another Chaudhri named Mir Badr-ud-din. He was not on good terms with the Brahmans and Khatris of the city. They complained to Chait Singh, Governor of Lahore, who lived in the Saman Burj (Octagonal tower) in the Lahore fort. They falsely told him that Badr-ud-dun had sent an invitation to Shah Zaman to invade Panjab again. Chait Singh imprisoned Badr-ud-din without making an inquiry into the allegation. Mian Muhammad Ashiq, Mohkam-ud-din, Chaudhri Kakka, Ibrat Khan and many other leading persons waited on Chait Singh and pleaded for Badr-ud-din's release due to his innocence. Chait Singh refused to believe them, and insultingly sent them away. They continued their endeavours for a month to secure Badr-ud-din's liberty, but to no purpose. In view of Shah Zaman's permission to Ranjit Singh to seize Lahore, they deputed a messenger to him at Ramnagar on the Chenab, offering cooperation in the caputre of the fort and the city. Ranjit Singh was informed that they required only his presence, as everything else would be done by them. They also invited Sada Kaur to join and aid Ranjit Singh in the enterprise.

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Qazi Abdur Rahman's Mission

Ranjit Singh deputed Qazi Abdur Rahman of Ramnagar with the emissary. The adroit Qazi met Mian Muhammad Ashiq, Mehar Mohkam-ud-din of Nawankot, Muhammad Azim and Hafiz Muhammad of Baghbanpura, Mehar Shadi Katarband, Ahmad Khan Bhindar, Hakim Rae, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, Muhammad Baqar, Muhammad Tahar, Maulvi Muhammad Salim, Mufti Muhammad Mukarram, Mian Muhammad Jan of village Laverian, the religious guide of Moran Kanjri and Abid Khan of Atari. All of them agreed to accept Ranjit Singh as the chief of Lahore. In order to assure him of their fidelity, they signed a petition, and sent it by Hakim Rae who accompanied the Qazi.

The success of the Qazi's diplomatic mission highly pleased Ranjit Singh. He conferred robes of honour upon the Qazi and Hakim Rae. He sent the Qazi again to Lahore to settle the plan of seizure. It was decided that Ranjit Singh should attack the Lahori Gate of the city, which after a brief resistance would be thrown open.

March to Batala

Ranjit Singh made necessary preparations and collected his troops. He marched towards Amritsar, declaring that he was going to have a holy bath in the tank of Durbar Sahib. In fact he went to Batala, 38 km north of Amritsar, where Rani Sada Kaur, his mother-in-law, a lady of great ability and masculine intrepidity "one of the most remarkable women in Punjab history" joined him with the troops of the Kanahya Misl. Their total force numbered about 5,000.

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Advance to Lahore

From Batala they came to Majitha, 20 km from Amritsar. There they were received by Muhammad Azim Baghban who had arrived from Lahore to guide them. Travelling in the night and avoiding Amritsar, they arrived at the Shalamar Gardens of Lahore in the early hours of the morning on 4 July, 1799. There Mian Muhammad Ashiq and Mehar Mohkam-ud-din met Ranjit Singh. They told him that a breach had been made in the city wall between Khizri and Yakki Gates. Ranjit Singh got suspicious, and declined to enter like a thief. At midday he moved to the garden of Wazir Khan where now stand the buildings of the Central Museum and the Punjab Public Library.

Mohar Singh, one of the Lahore chiefs, sent to Ranjit Singh sweets as a mark of hospitality, but in reality to seek his aid against Chait Singh. Ranjit Singh informed the Sikh sardar that he was coming from Amritsar

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and was bound for Gujranwala, and requested him to arrange for boats to cross the Ravi. Ranjit Singh then visited the *ghat*, and after giving rewards to boatmen he returned in the evening.

The nobles of the city who were a party to this affair felt that opening of Lahori Gate which was in their care was improper and was disgraceful. They suggested an attack on Kashmiri Gate. This decision was conveyed to Ranjit Singh rather too late, as his men in small batches had already invested the Lahori Gate before dawn on the morning of 5 July, 1799.

Captured the Lahori Gate

The Gate was not opened by the guards. Ranjit Singh applied his artillery. The strong defences of the Gate defied his attempt. Ranjit Singh fought for a couple of hours, and then retired to Chah Wiran (the deserted well) to take rest, and decided to, besiege the city. The nobles were afraid of the horrors of a siege, and informed Ranjit Singh that they would open the Lahori Gate the following morning. He agreed and offered tempting terms to the nobles for performing the deed faithfully.

Early in the morning on 6 July, Ranjit Singh marched upon the Lahori Gate. It was strongly guarded under the personal supervision of Chait Singh. Under instructions of Mohkam-ud-din, the guards deceived Chait Singh by the alarming news that Ranjit Singh was attacking the Delhi Gate which had been actually invested by the Kanahya force under Rani Sada Kaur. Chait Singh immediately hurried to that place, and in his absence the Lahori Gate was thrown open.

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Mohar Singh Captured

Ranjit Singh suddenly dashed into the town. He first attacked the *haveli* (mansion) of Lakhpat Rae which was the residence of Mohar Singh. Some fighting took place inside the building. Mohar Singh managed to escape and hid himself in the house of a straw seller (*Bhusfarosh*). He was captured and produced before Ranjit Singh who greeted him smilingly, and allowed him to retire in safety to his lands with all his movable property. Meanwhile the Delhi Gate also fell in Sada Kaur's hands. Chait Singh fled to the fort. Sada Kaur joined Ranjit Singh.

Occupation of the Fort, 7 July, 1799, Sunday

Afterwards Ranjit Singh made for the fort. Chait Singh ordered his gunners stationed in the towers of the Badshahi Mosque just opposite the fort to open fire on the invaders. Firing continued from noon till evening.

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Finding himself unable to cope with the situation, Chait Singh opened negotiations through Sada Kaur. He was permitted to retire in peace with his eight issueless wives and property to village Wainike which was granted to him as a jagir. But according to Amar Nath, the fort came into Ranjit Singh's possession on 7 July, 1799, Wednesday, 15 Har, 1856. In fact it was the day of the durbar.

The Durbar

The young chief's first measures were dictated by that practical common sense which distinguished the execution of his plans in future. Ten days later Ranjit Singh held a great durbar in the fort which was attended by principal personalities of the city. He assured them that their persons, honour, property and rights would be quite safe, and no lawlessness would be permitted under any circumstances. Gate keepers had been appointed at all the thirteen gates of the city to report to him any disturbance in their locality. A strong contingent roamed inside the city in main bazars to maintain peace and order. He richly rewarded all those who had helped him in the enterprise. Mehar Mohkam-ud-din, the keeper of the Lahori Gate, was honoured with the title of *Baba*, and was appointed the administrator of the city of Lahore. Other leaders received the titles of *Sahib* and *Meharban*.

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The rains had already begun. The weather was cool and refreshing. Ranjit Singh entertained the audience with sweets. Sada Kaur had called in cartloads of luscious mangoes from Batala and Mukerian. She added fragrance by giving them baskets of mangoes.

Receipt of a Khilat of Confirmation

On hearing the news of Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore, Shah Zaman realized that he had lost the Panjab to the Sikhs. Besides his own position at Kabul was becoming shaky. Therefore to have at least the semblance of authority, he sent a *khilat* of confirmation to Ranjit Singh as his Governor of Lahore in August, 1799. This was corroborated by John Collins, British Resident at the Court of Daulat Rao Sindhia (1795-1803) from Fatahgarh on the Ganga. He informed the Governor-General: "Zaman Shah is endeavouring to attach to his interests Ranjit Singh, the usurpur of Lahore, who has lately received a rich *khilat* from the Durrani prince". On 11 May, 1800, he again wrote: "Ever since Ranjit Singh obtained the *khilat* from the Shah, he announces himself as chief of Lahore on the part of Zaman Shah". This was obviously done by him to placate Muslim chiefs and people who were hostile to the Sikhs.

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The Coronation

Some writers are of the view that Ranjit Singh held his coronation shortly after his conquest of Lahore. The Panjab Government Record Office at Lahore published in 1935, entitled *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-1817.*

It contains 170 newsletters commencing from the 1 November, 1810, and ending on 3 October, 1817, covering 278 printed pages. All these letters begin: "News of Deorhi of Sirdar Ranjit Singh Bahadur." One letter dated 2 September, 1817, in place of 'Sirdar' uses the word 'Khalsa'. It states: "Khalsa Ranjit Singh Bahadur is in Lahore". In the body of these newsletters Ranjit Singh is called "The Noble Sarkar". In the same newsletter in paragraph no.2 in place of "The Noble Sarkar", the term Maharaja is also used for the first time. It says: "The Maharaja Bahadur spoke to...."

In this volume one stray letter dated 10 June, 1822, also uses the term Maharaja. It states: "News of Amritsar, dated 10 June, 1822 (20th Ramzan, 1237 AH) Maharaja Ranjit Singh Bahadur entered Lahore"

We have not found any mention of Ranjit Singh's coronation in any contemporary Persian work or in the records of the Panjab State Archives, Lahore and Patiala, or the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

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In the First Anglo-Sikh Treaty of 1 January, 1806, Ranjit Singh is called "Sardar". In the Treaty of Amritsar, 1809, Ranjit Singh is called "Raja of Lahore". In the Indus Navigation Treaty of 1832 Ranjit Singh is called "His Highness the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Ruler of the Punjab."

It leads us to believe that Ranjit Singh did not perform any formal coronation at all. Diwan Amar Nath, son of Diwan Dina Nath (finance minister of Ranjit Singh) and himself being in Ranjit Singh's service, says that Ranjit Singh held a durbar in 1801, attended by all his feudatories, officers, munshis and maulvis. At this formal gathering Ranjit Singh proclaimed the assumption of the title of *Sarkar*. He declared that he was one of them. He would conduct the affairs of the state in the interest of his people and not to satisfy his own whim or fancy or sense of pride or authority. His aim was: (a) to establish and preserve law and order; (b) to protect the country from foreign invasions; (c) to bring about economic prosperity; (d) to create cultural unity between Muslims on the one hand and Hindus and Sikhs on the other; (e) to administer justice impartially between high and low, and rich and poor; (f) to give proper share to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in his government strictly on merit.

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It is a well known fact that he never sat on a throne, nor did he ever wear a crown. His oriental chair (*murha*) was his throne, and his turban was his crown. His coins never bore his effigy or his name. His government was Sarkar Khalsaji. His court was Durbar Khalsaji. He was addressed as Sarkar or Singh Sahib. According to Khushwant Singh "Ranjit Singh convinced the people of Lahore and the Punjab that he did not intend to set up a Sikh kingdom but a Punjabi state in which Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs would be equal before the law and have the same rights and duties."

In this durbar, Qazi Nizam-ud-din was appointed religious head of Muslims. He was invested with full authority in religious matters. His deputy was Sadullah Chishti. The civil cases like mortgages, contracts, sales, etc. were entrusted to Mufti Muhammad Shah. Imam Bakhsh Kharsowar or pony rider was given the post of Kotwal, or head of the city police. Headmen were appointed in various *mohallas*. Soldiers were placed at the city gates. Khalifa Nur-ud-din was nominated public physician to treat *imraz-e-khalq* with the title of Hakim Ansari. A Lambardar was appointed to look after about twenty families. He was made responsible for the protection of their persons and property. A wealthy and propertied person of the village was given the post of Lambardar.

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At the same time Ranjit Singh established a mint at Lahore. First of all he issued a silver coin. It was called Nanak Shahi rupee. It weighed eleven *mashas* and two *ratis*. The rupee bore the old inscription of eariler Sikh rupee:

Deg-o-teg-o-fatah nusrat be darang
yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh

One lakh of rupees was granted to Moti Ram for the repair of city wall and moat. The fort was repaired and was put in a state of defence. The durbar house, called Musamman or Saman Burj, was renovated. It was an octagonal tower of the fort looking on the River Ravi which flowed by its side. Ranjit Singh held court, both formal and informal in this building. The famous Zamzama gun was placed there. Ahmad Shah Durrani and Shah Zaman also used to hold court there.

Moti Mandar

Moti Masjid in the fort of Lahore was given the name of Moti Mandar and was converted into a treasury containing cash.

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A Cabal at Bhasin, 1800

A formidable party of[1] five neighbouring chiefs was formed against Ranjit Singh. They were stung by jealousy at Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore and attaining supreme position in the Panjab. They were Nizam-ud-din of Kasur, Gulab Singh Bangi of Amritsar, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who was then living in his Ramgarhia fort at Amritsar, Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat and Jodh Singh of Wazirabad. In the early part of 1800 they collected their forces at Amritsar and marched towards Lahore. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, an octogenarian, was represented by his sons. They took up their position at village Bhasin, about 16 km east of Lahore. Ranjit Singh halted at village Awan, 13 km north-west of Lahore. He was joined by a force of the Kanahya Misl under Sada Kaur. The troop movements continued for two months, and a number of skirmishes took place. As the population of Lahore and its neighbourhood supported Ranjit Singh, the confederates could not dare advance towards the capital. Gulab Singh died in his camp of too much dissipation, and the confederacy broke up.

Moran, the Marvellous, a Rare Combination of Gul-o-Bulbul-o-Taus

Women belong to no caste, no class and no race. They have a special category of their own. It is determined not by birth or family but by their beauty, their charm, their grace, their intelligence and ready wit. These qualities make some girls of the lowest social strata the equal of great ladies. Moran belonged to this type.

Moran was a dancing girl of Lahore, and appears to be a budding flower of 12 or 13 years of age. She attracted the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1802.

He was then just 21 years old, an age called *Jawani Diwani*, when youthful faculties are at their best and youthful follies are at their worst. Ranjit Singh like many other young men had a combination of both in him.

Diwan Amar Nath, son of Diwan Dina Nath, in his *Zafar Namah-e-Ranjit Singh*, written in Persian, takes three full pages to describe Moran's charm. She danced like a peacock. Her bewitching glances struck like arrows. Her extremely black curly locks, her white, moonlike, sparkling face, her deerlike eyes, her elegant grace of form, symmetry of movement, delicacy and dignity of deportment, sweetness of voice and melody, her unforgettable smile and ready wit were such as could make a manly man

[1]Baba Prem Singh Hoti in his book *Sher-e-Panjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Punjabi edition, p. 37, gives only four names, omitting Jodh Singh Wazirabadia.

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on earth see a thousand graces in her.

Ranjit Singh, an ardent lover of beauty all his life, could not but succumb to this charmer. His budding youth, overpowering passion, and enormous power and pelf drew him towards Moran like a fly to honey. Ali-ud-din in his *Ibrat Namah* writes that Ranjit Singh did not live in the fort at night. He spent nights in the house of his beloved Moran, the dancing girl (*Bakhanah-e-Moran biwi kanchani*). His meals and other things were supplied to him there. During his morning exercise, Moran was seated on the same horse and off he went riding with her. No followers were permitted to accompany him. He generally had a full gallop in the level plain between the fort and the river. Ranjit Singh must have enjoyed greatest glee when Moran feared a fall and cried to the utmost pleasure of the rider.

Jo bat tujh men thi,
Woh mere bayan men nahin.

Baji Rao and Mastani used to ride separately stirrup by stirrup. Begam Samru drove in a covered bullock carriage after her husband's horse. In both these cases the lover and the beloved were two bodies and one soul. In Ranjit Singh's case there was one body and one soul. There cannot be a better example of genuine princely love.

Ranjit Singh's residence in the Kanjarkhana was intolerable to many, but none dared to dissuade the Maharaja from it. At that time the senior-most noble of Lahore in age and status was Mehar Mohkam-ud-din. He was one of the invitees and helper in Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore. It was he who had thrown open the Lahori Gate to Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh at a public durbar had conferred the title of *Baba* (grand-father) upon him. He took up courage in both hands to give a word of advice to the young chief. He admonished him to be more cautious and careful.

Ishq pe zor nahin hai ye wo atish Ghalib,
jo lagae na lage, aur bujhae na bujhe.

Ranjit Singh became furious. His title of *Baba* was immediately withdrawn. He was sentenced to hard labour in jail (*Bazindan-e-sakht garifiar kardah*), and a fine of Rs. 10,000 was imposed on him and his lands were confiscated. He was fettered and imprisoned at Ramnagar on the Chenab. On his failure to pay the fine he was brought back to Lahore.

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He begged from relatives and friends with folded hands and with utmost difficulty collected the amount and paid the fine. His lands were restored to him, but he spent the rest of his life in seclusion and sadness. His friends also suffered from imprisonment.

Sikh wa ko dijie ja ko sikh suhae,
Sikh na dije bandra jo bayye ka ghar jae.

After this incident Ranjit Singh married her and brought her into the palace. His second wife Raj Kaur Nakain went to her jagir at Shaikhupura with her newly born son Kharak Singh. His first wife Mahtab Kaur raised a hue and cry in protest. But she was helpless against her masterful husband.

This affair with Moran took another turn. It outraged the Akalis of Durbar Sahib, Amritsar. They were enraged. They summoned him to appear before the Akal Takht. The Maharaja obeyed. The head priest denounced him in the open assembly for violating the social rules of the Khalsa. The Maharaja listened to him in a spirit of humility, and stood penitent before the congregation. He begged forgiveness with folded hands again and again. A Gurmata was held there and then. Ranjit Singh was declared guilty. He was to be given one hundred lashes on his bare back before the assembly. The Maharaja at once took off his shirt. He was tied to the trunk of a tamarind tree which stood in a wing of the Akal Takht, with his hands bound on his back. The audience who loved him most intensely burst out into tears. The head priest declared:

> Khalsaji! The Maharaja has accepted the punishment that you decided to inflict upon him. But he is after all our king. We should honour his position. I suggest that he should be given only one stripe on his back as a token of his submission to the majesty of social law.

The whole assembly acclaimed the decision with a shout of joy. An Akali lightly struck him on his back and untied him from the tree. The Maharaja bowed low before all.

The assembly was served with sweet pudding (*karah prashad*) and a fine of 1¼ lakhs of rupees was paid to the Hari Mandar.

Comment

Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore formed an important landmark in the history of the Panjab. This event marked the beginning of the

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downfall of the independent chiefs on the one hand, and the establishment of a monarchy on the other.

Previously Ranjit Singh's ambitions were few,
After conquering Lahore they rapidly grew,
Go East, go West, North, South, all are best.

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CHAPTER 3

Elimination of the Sikh Upper Ten

Expansion needed money and men,
Ranjit required a golden egg laying hen;
Not to mention one, he found scores,
The Sikh sardars who owned crores.

Ranjit Singh's Policy towards Sikh Sardars

Baron Charles Hugel, who visited Panjab in 1835-36, observed: "Other nations need to be spurred on to bravery, the Sikh requires a curb to restrain his reckless impetuosity".

The Sikh sardars considered Ranjit Singh as their equal and would not accept him as their overlord, but kingship is based on the principle of subordination of others.

In order to establish his supremacy and to reduce the Sikh sardars to a position lower than his own, Ranjit Singh completely ignored the institution of Gurmata founded by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. After his conquest of Lahore and Amritsar no Sikh sardar could claim equality with Ranjit Singh. It is alleged by some writers that he called Gurmata in 1805 at the time of Lake-Holkar episode. At that time Ranjit Singh held consultations with Sada Kaur, his mother-in-law and Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, his maternal uncle. It was thus a family conclave and not a Gurmata.

Ranjit Singh was apprehensive of his co-religionists in preserving his kingship. He knew that Sikh young men had betrayed the builder of the first independent Sikh States, Banda Bahadur, and thereby they had destroyed their own State, their leader and themselves into the bargain. Later on the Sikh sardars of the misls had wrecked themselves by mutual rivalry and enmity which were embedded in their blood. He feared the Sikhs more than he did the Durrani or Barakzai Afghans or frontier Pathans.

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Threefold Policy

Ranjit Singh adopted a threefold policy towards Sikh sardars. The weaker must go to the wall without any compunction. With some of the stronger ones he made matrimonial alliances and demanded territory and money in dowry, and put an end to them in due course. With the strongest he entered into solemn brotherhood by exchanging turbans and taking ritualistic oaths on the holy *Granth*. These vows were ropes of sand. He used their military and financial resources, as well as their brawn and brain in extending his kingdom. To quote Hugal again –

> His conscience never troubled him whether he robbed the widow or orphan; deprived some unfortunate dependent on his honour of all his property; seized the treasures confined to his care, or claimed the whole fortune of his friend, or even the inheritance of his own son.

The Methods

Ranjit Singh adopted several methods in reducing the Sikh sardars:

1. He frequently travelled in the country lying between the Satluj and the Indus. He called upon the Sikh sardars to be present in his camp. If a sardar disobeyed or delayed compliance, he was at once deprived of his territory and movable property including cash, jewellery, valuable carpets, rugs, utensils, elephants, horses, which in no case were ever restored, and the chief was imprisoned. Sardar Sham Singh Atariwala was fined fifty thousand rupees for not allowing Bellasis admission into the town of Kasur on the basis of a general letter of authority issued by the Maharaja in 1831.

2. Whenever a sardar died, he compelled his successor to pay a heavy succession duty. The reason advanced by the Maharaja was that the sardar's death had deprived him of the deceased's services, and therefore he must be compensated for it.

3. In some cases the subdued sardars and their soldiers were recruited in the Maharaja's army. Sometimes they formed separate derahs as a unit of the king's army. It was with the help of the trained soldiers of the Sikh misls that the Maharaja subjugated the Sikh sardars and other chiefs both Hindu and Mulsim and conquered the big provinces of Multan, Kashmir, Hazara and Peshawar, which formed part of the Durrani kingdom.

4. Another important feature of his policy was to rob a weak person with one hand and bribe a strong camp follower with the other hand. Whereas the British Government converted the Sikh sardars of the Cis-Satluj region from rulers into landlords, Ranjit Singh reduced the Sikh

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sardars in the Trans-Satluj territory from chiefs into cultivators and soldiers.

5. Those in his service were kept down by fines and forfeitures.

6. His grand standing army overawed every chief, and kept the forces of feudal chiefs in control.

7. The annual review at Dasahra festival kept the feudal lords terror-stricken on account of Ranjit Singh's strict scrutiny regarding the number of troops, their horses and equipment of both.

8. As a counterpoise against any possible aggression by the Sikhs against him, Ranjit Singh created almost an independent state subordinate to him in the north of Panjab called Jammu province under Dogra brothers. It consisted of a large territory extending from Hazara hills to the River Ravi, including Ladakh, Kishtwar, Bhadrawah, and seven big estates in the plains of the Panjab. He conferred the title of Raja on the Dogra brothers of Jammu – Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh, Suchait Singh and Dhian Singh's son Hira Singh. Nobody else was made Raja by Ranjit Singh. Their financial position was more sound than that of any other Sikh sardar. They maintained their own army separate from Maharaja's army. It consisted of 7 to 8 thousand men with a strong park of artillery. It comprised six 9-pounders, six 6-pounders, horse artillery guns, four mortars, four howitzers, and two 3-pounder mountain guns – 22 pieces in all, besides a number of camel guns.

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Alexander Gardner was taken away from Maharaja's service and was placed in charge of Jammu artillery. Raja Dhian Singh gave him one of his concubines as a wife. Gardner was also a favourite with the British political officers at Ludhiana, as well as with the Yusafzai chiefs on the north-west frontiers. He misused his position shortly after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in complicity with the British Agency at Ludhiana as well as the Dogra brothers.

A brief account of Ranjit Singh's absorption and subordination of Sikh misls follows.

1. The Ahluwalia Misl

Fatah Singh Ahluwalia was Ranjit Singh's junior by four years. He was born in 1784, and succeeded to the headship of his misl at Kapurthala in 1801. Territorially, militarily and financially he was in no way inferior to Ranjit Singh. In prestige he could claim superiority being a descendant of the head of Dal Khalsa, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who had been brought up in *Gurughar*. In 1802 Ranjit Singh made friends with Fatah Singh by the

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exchange of turbans and taking oaths of lasting brotherhood on the holy *Granth* in the Gurdwara at Tarn Taran. Ranjit Singh commanded resources of four misls—Sukarchakia, Kanahya, Nakai because Raj Kaur Nakain was married by him in 1797 and Ahluwalia—for his policy of expansion. Fatah Singh's interest in joining Ranjit Singh was to elevate himself equal to the lord of Lahore, to subdue his enemies with combind forces to recover some of his lost territories and perhaps to gain some new ones out of those won by his turbaned brother.

In December, 1802, with the help of Fatah Singh and his mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, Ranjit Singh captured Amritsar. In March, 1803, Ranjit Singh seized Phagwara from the widow of Chuhar Mal, and gave it to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia as a reward for his service at Amritsar.

After celebrating Dasahra in October, 1803, Ranjit Singh advanced towards Multan, accompanied by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia. He went to Jhang, Maghiana and Chiniot. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia was assigned Pindi Bhattian situated not far from Chiniot.

In 1805 at Ranjit Singh's direction, Fatah Singh brought about peace between the fugitive prince, Jaswant Rao Holkar, and his pursuer Lord Lake, both of whom had entered the Panjab. Fatah Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh in his Cis-Satluj expeditions in 1806 and 1807. In the latter year Ranjit Singh recovered Naraingarh for Fatah Singh. Fatah Singh served the Maharaja in several other campaigns, as a faithful ally.

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In 1825 some differences arose between the two chiefs over the construction of a building at Kapurthala. Fatah Singh called it a summer house, while Ranjit Singh declared it a fortress though it had no fortifications at all. Ranjit Singh was preparing to annex Kapurthala State which was saved by advice of British officers at Ludhiana. Fatah Singh's territory situated to the west of River Beas was absorbed by the Maharaja in his dominion. It included Jandiala, Micheki, Nandpur, and Waiowal. Fatah Singh died in 1837. A heavy *nazrana* was realized from his son Nihal Singh who served the Maharaja faithfully in order to save his State. This was the only Sikh misl which escaped Ranjit Singh's usurpation.

2. The Bhangi Misl

The Bhangi Misl was the most powerful unit of Dal Khalsa. Its possessions lay scattered all over Panjab. Starting from the neighbourhood of Attock, the Bhangis possessed Hasan Abdal, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Jhang, Chiniot, Wazirabad, Sialkot, Pasrur, Lahore, Amritsar, Tarn

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Taran, Firozpur, Jagadhri and Buria on the Yamuna. They held Multan province for a decade and received tribute from Jammu. The three confederates–Ranjit Singh, Sada Kaur and Fatah Singh were determined to hurl down the Bhangis from their superior position. Below are given a few examples of Ranjit Singh's occupation of Bhangi territories.

Amritsar

Ranjit Singh was keen to unite the political capital Lahore with Amritsar, the religious capital of the Sikhs. The last notable Bhangi chief of Amritsar was Gulab Singh Bhangi who died in 1800, leaving behind his widow, Mai Sukhan and a 10-year-old son Gurdit Singh. Ranjit Singh demanded from Mai Sukhan Zamzama gun, over which he also had some claim. The request was turned down. In December, 1802, Ranjit Singh with his friend Fatah Singh Ahluwalia and mother-in-law Sada Kaur attacked Amritsar which fell after a short resistance. Sukhan and Gurdit Singh escaped in the night and remained exposed to cold and rain in the open the whole night. Early next morning they took refuge in Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's fort of Ramgarh at Amritsar. Ranjit Singh seized their territories and entire property.

Ranjit Singh's aunt, uterine sister of his father and wife of Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat, was found living with Mai Sukhan. She was put in a covered bullock carriage (*rath*) and sent to live with Mai Sukhan in the Ramgarhia fort. On Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's pleading, the Maharaja granted Gurdit Singh a jagir of five wells.

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Gobindgarh Fort, Amritsar

Gujar Singh Bhangi's fort at Amritsar, called Qila Bhangian as well as Lohgarh, was renamed Gobindgarh fort. It was rebuilt by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1808-9. It was used as a treasury where all the cash, jewellery, diamonds including Koh-e-Nur and other valuable articles were kept and preserved. It was surrounded by a big wall of unburnt bricks containing 8 towers and 2 big porches. A ditch, deep and wide, built of burnt bricks and lime, ran around it. Outside the two *deorhis* were erected big *damdamas*. About 2,000 soldiers always guarded it. It was put in charge of Imam-ud-din, brother of Faqir Aziz-ud-din.

The City

In 1823 Rama Nand Sahu died issueless, leaving immense wealth behind. The Maharaja realized 8 lakhs of rupees from his descendants as succession duties. This money was spent on the construction of a rampart

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running round the city. This rampart was made of mud, 25 feet high with 12 well-built gates in it. A deep ditch was dug around it. Outside the ditch, another wall was constructed which had another ditch outside. The entire circumference of the rampart was 5,100 *karam*. Under Ranjit Singh, Amritsar became the richest city in northern India, and larger in population than Lahore. Hugel observed: "The wealth of the whole Panjab seems to have been collected in it, and the great merchants have made it their abode".

Atariwala Brar Jats–Jai Singh Atariwala

Towards the close of 1821 when Ranjit Singh was busy in subduing the Nawab of Mankerah, Sardar Jai Singh Atariwala appointed on the north-west frontier deserted his post and went over to Wazir Azim Khan of Kabul. With his help Azim Khan began to seize the Sikh posts in the Peshawar region, and threatened Khairabad, the chief cantonment of the Sikhs west of the Indus. Two years later Jai Singh rejoined Ranjit Singh at the battle of Tihri near Naushahra.

Nihal Singh Atariwala

Nihal Singh Atariwala took a prominent part in nearly all campaigns of the Maharaja from 1801 to 1817, when he sacrificed his life, to save Ranjit Singh from serious illness. Sham Singh Atariwala was his son.

Sham Singh Atariwala

The Maharaja sent Bellasis on an inspection tour of his Cis-Satluj territory situated south of the river. He was given a general written authority to stay anywhere by showing that letter. Having finished his job he crossed River Satluj at Firozpur and came to Kasur. Sham Singh Atariwala was incharge of Kasur. Bellasis claimed admittance on the ground of royal *parwanah*. Sham Singh sent him a message that he could not admit an uninvited stranger into his town. At Lahore he reported the matter to the Maharaja who observed:

> Ah Bellasis! so Sham Singh would not let you in! he is ruffling his feathers on the ground of our approaching alliance with his home, but we'll teach him to respect our *parwanah*.

Many courtiers exclaimed that the sardar was *khairkhwah*, faithful and brave. The Maharaja replied: "Such an example must not go unpunished and that I remember his father's services. His son should not be allowed

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to shut the gates of Kasur against his sovereign. But taking all things into consideration, we will on this occasion simply fine Sham Singh fifty thousand rupees: Eh, Dena Nath, note the *Jurimanah*, and see that it is realized". Murmurs and further remonstrances arose, but the Maharajah silenced the speakers with, "*Bus* ! the order is given, we'll hear no more on the subject, and Sham Singh may thank my clemency".

Chiniot

Chiniot is said to be a corrupted form of Chandanot, which means Chandan's hut. According to tradition Chandan was the daughter of a local prince. She used to hunt in the jungle in man's dress. She was charmed with the picturesque plain surrounded by small rocky hills with river Chenab flowing at a distance of 5 km to the west. Shah Jahan's minister Sadullah Khan belonged to this place. On account of him the town had brick-built houses.

Jhang-Maghiana

Jhang, the land of Hir and Ranjha, in the local dialect means a cluster of trees. The town is situated 5 km from River Chenab, 80 km from Chiniot, 230 km from Lahore, and 128 km from Multan. Jhang formed the northern district of Multan province. It was the headquarters of Sials. Maghiana, another town closely associated with Jhang, is situated 5 km away. The twin Jhang-Maghiana were the meeting place of merchants from Peshawar and Multan. It was a common sight to behold camels laden with salt, saltpetre, rice, cotton, ghi, asafoetida and dry fruits at these places.

Karam Singh Dulu

Karam Singh Dulu Bhangi was the chief of Chiniot-Jhang-Maghiana. Dulu means a serpent. It implied that he was a terror to lawless people. He had eight strong forts in his territory which yielded him 14 lakhs of rupees annually. Karam Singh, on his death, was succeeded by his son Jassa Singh. While returning from the neighbourhood of Multan, and entrusting Jhang and Maghiana to Ahmad Khan Sial, Ranjit Singh came to Chiniot. He besieged the town in 1802. Jassa Singh resisted him for two months. The contemporary writer Khushwaqt Rae says that Ranjit Singh had taken an oath on the holy *Granth* allowing Jassa Singh to leave with all his property. On surrendering his fort of Chiniot, Jassa Singh was imprisoned. He escaped in three clothes which he was then wearing. He was granted maintenance allowance afterwards. The Maharaja also seized

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Karam Singh's fort of Wasosohawa from Gujar Singh Bhangi's brother Chait Singh, who was imprisoned in the fort of Gujranwala.

Fatah Singh Kalianwala

Fatah Singh Kalianwala was a great and powerful sardar who served Ranjit Singh in several campaigns from 1800 to 1807. He was popular with Ranjit Singh's troops also. Once at Wazirabad the Maharaja asked Fatah Singh to call those troopers who were ready to follow him. Thereupon the greater part of Ranjit Singh's force joined Fatah Singh's banner.

Fatah Singh was present at the siege of the fort of Naraingarh below Nahan in 1807. Ranjit Singh entrusted the command to Fatah Singh. After a few days' siege the fort could not be captured from a prince of Sirmaur State. Ranjit Singh rebuked Kalianwala. The brave sardar could not bear the insult. The following day he delivered a vehement assault and was killed in the fighting. Ranjit Singh heaved a sigh of relief for getting rid of a powerful sardar who might have challenged his authority. His estates and property were confiscated.

Dal Singh Naherna

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In October, after Dasahra of 1823, Ranjit Singh summoned to Rohtas all jagirdars for inspection of their contingents which they were bound to keep for state service. Dal Singh Naherna of barber caste an old jagirdar, was found deficient in number and equipment of his troops. He was abused in a public durbar and threatened with a heavy fine. He could not bear the insult, took poison at night and died.

Nidhan Singh Hattu of Daska

Daska was an important town in Sialkot district. Nidhan Singh Hattu of Daska owned many parganahs there. In October, 1810, Ranjit Singh was halting at Ramnagar near the Chenab river. He summoned Nidhan Singh Hattu before him. The sardar knew that Ranjit Singh was in the habit of treacherously imprisoning independent Sikh chiefs. He replied that he would come under the security of a Bedi priest. Ranjit Singh immediately invested Daska in October, 1810. He could not take the fort even after a fortnight's siege. Nidhan Singh's family fell into his hands. They were subjected to "shameful impositions". This did not deter Nidhan Singh to surrender. The Maharaja thereupon sent Bedi Baba Mulkhraj and Sodhi Baba Jamait Singh assuring them on the holy *Granth* that Nidhan Singh would be honourably treated, and he would be given a

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suitable jagir on his surrendering his fort. Nidhan Singh fearlessly rode into Ranjit Singh's camp on 30 October, 1810. In utter disregard of his oaths he fettered the sardar and imprisoned him. He remained in gaol for six weeks. The priests sat in *dharna* at Ranjit Singh's court to protest. Nidhan Singh was set free in December, 1810. The offer of a jagir was rejected by proud Nidhan Singh. He crossed into Jammu territory and took up service with Ata Muhammad Khan, Governor of Kashmir at Srinagar. Daska with its eight taluqas and his entire property was seized.

Sudh Singh Dodia

Sudh Singh Dodia lived in village Doda situated in the Shakargarh tahsil of Sialkot district. He possessed Bhopalwala, Jamke, Jassar, Ranjrur and Sadhanwal. He decided to submit to Ranjit Singh. One of his trusted men, Gaja Singh was sent to Lahore with two lakhs of rupees, one elephant and a number of horses. Ranjit Singh took the presents, and despatched Ganda Singh Safi to seize Sudh Singh's fort of Jassar. Safi failed to capture it. Ranjit Singh jocularly remarked: "Safi has lost his safa." Safi was a cleaner of furniture in the royal apartments. Safa meant turban, a symbol of respect.

Sudh Singh was granted 25 villages on condition of providing 18 horsemen on demand. Gaja Singh was in command of this contingent. He fought in the campaigns of Attock, Multan, Kashmir and Mankerah. Sudh Singh died in 1813. Jamke and Bhopalwala were taken as succession duty. On Gaja Singh's death in 1823, the remaining territory was annexed.

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Gujrat

Gujrat is situated 8 km west of River Chenab. It lay like a gem in green woods of the region. It was the starting point for Kashmir via Pir Panjal Pass. The soil was fertile, but it was slightly cultivated. Gujrat was famous for the manufacture of swords. The Mughal Emperor Akbar had built a fort there. The Faqir brothers, Aziz-ud-din and Nur-ud-din, were its famous governors. In 1834, it passed into the hands of Raja Gulab Singh who retained its charge upto 1846. The town is noted for the shrine of Shah Daulah, the Muslim saint.

Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat

Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat was married to the sister of Ranjit Singh's father Mahan Singh. Both father and son were determined to seize Gujrat. Hence great illwill existed between the two families. In 1790

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Mahan Singh demanded tribute from Sahib Singh. On his refusal he attacked his territory. Mahan Singh fell ill and died. Ranjit Singh seized Sahib Singh's places Sodhra and Goindke in 1791.

In 1800 Sahib Singh joined a confederacy to dispossess Ranjit Singh of Lahore. In 1802 Sahib Singh plundered Gujranwala. Ranjit Singh with Sada Kaur rushed there. After a sharp engagement Sahib Singh was taken prisoner, but he was set free. When Ranjit Singh was busy in Kasur, Sahib Singh again attacked Gujranwala. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia in a fierce engagement drove him away. The relations between Sahib Singh and one of his wives who was sister of Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, maternal uncle of Ranjit Singh, became so strained that she applied to Maharaja Ranjit Singh for help. He took possession of Islamgarh fort as his fees for settling the issue. Islamgarh is situated near Jalalpur 16 km north-west of Gujrat. It was the headquarters of Varaich Jats, and was converted into a stronghold by Sahib Singh. Her request for restoration of Islamgarh for a *nazrana* of Rs. 30,000 was rejected.

Jodh Singh Bhangi of Wazirabad and Sahib Singh

Jodh Singh Bhangi possessed Wazirabad and about 500 other villages. He was married to the daughter of Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat. Ranjit Singh was keen to possess Wazirabad without any fighting. The Maharaja invited Jodh Singh on a friendly visit to Lahore. Jodh Singh came at the head of a strong contingent. Ranjit Singh received him with great affection. Jodh Singh sent back his troops retaining only 25 attendants. Jodh Singh attended the durbar daily in the Saman Burj. At this time his men stayed outside the fort. Ranjit Singh planned one day to arrest Jodh Singh. A number of men were kept in hiding. Ranjit Singh gave a secret signal to his men to take hold of Jodh Singh. As the men were approaching, Jodh Singh stood up with his back to the wall. He unsheathed his sword and challenged them, thundering: "Come on; you will never be able to capture me alive. I have not learnt to turn my back on an enemy". Such bravery, courage and daring in full durbar deeply impressed Ranjit Singh. He rebuked his men, gave Jodh Singh rich presents, increased his jagirs, and bade him a respectful farewell. This took place in 1802. In December, 1809, Jodh Singh passed away. Ranjit Singh rushed to seize his lands and property on 1 January, 1810. Sahib Singh was Jodh Singh's father-in-law as well as overlord. He came to Wazirabad to prevent Ranjit Singh from confiscating his lands and property. He was immediately taken prisoner. Sahib Singh escaped in the night. The Maharaja's men pursued him. After a brief resistance Sahib Singh fled away with 50

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horsemen to his fort of Deva Batala. Ranjit Singh appropriated all his territories and property. He secured 5 to 6 lakhs in cash and 700 villages. Sahib Singh's mother Mai Lachhmi waited on Ranjit Singh and implored him to restore his property. The Maharaja after a long delay granted him four villages. Sahib Singh enjoyed this jagir for a few months only as he passed away in 1811.

His two wives, Daya Kaur and Ratan Kaur, celebrated for their charm and beauty, were added into Ranjit Singh's harem. Daya Kaur became the mother of Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh and Ratan Kaur of Multana Singh. Sahib Singh's son was already with Ranjit Singh enjoying a jagir. Jodh Singh's son Ganda Singh offered a large sum of money for confirmation. The Maharaja conferred a turban and a shawl, and confirmed him in his jagir for a fixed amount of tribute. Six months later, in June, 1810, a strong force was sent to Wazirabad. Ganda Singh was expelled and his estates, including Girthal, Gojra, Mitranwali and Talwandi Musa Khan, as well as property were seized. A couple of villages were given to him for subsistence.

Milkha Singh Pindiwala

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Rawalpindi derived its name from a small village of Rawal mendicants occultists situated to the north of the present city on the road to Murree. Milkha Singh's town grew on the northern bank of rivulet Leh flowing between high and straight banks. It formed a part of Muqarrab Khan Gakhar's domain. After his fall in the battle of Gujrat Gujar Singh Bhangi occupied it. He appointed Milkha Singh Thepuria in charge of Rawalpindi. Rawalpindi lies on the famous Grand Trunk Road 290 km from Lahore and 170 km from Peshawar. It served as a great centre of trade for the goods of Afghanistan and Central Asia as well as of Kashmir and Panjab. Milkha Singh maintained cordial relations with Ranjit Singh who addressed him as Baba or grandfather. He died in 1804. His son Jiwan Singh submitted to the Maharaja. Rawalpindi was annexed in 1813, and granted to Prince Kharak Singh in jagir. Jiwan Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh in his Kashmir expedition in 1814. Jiwan Singh died in 1815. The Maharaja incorporated Jiwan Singh's troops into his army, and they were called Derah Pindiwala.

Nahar Singh Bhangi

Nahar Singh Bhangi possessed Chamyari and Pasrur with 13 taluqas. Pasrur is situated about 32 km south of Sialkot. It occupied an important position. Under the Mughals and Afghans it was the headquarters of

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Sialkot district. On Nahar Singh's death in 1807, his territory was seized by the Maharaja, and a small jagir was granted to his son.

Sialkot

Sialkot is situated 48 km east of Wazirabad and 36 km south of Jammu. Sialkot was possessed by four Bhangi sardars including Jiwan Singh who held the fort. In 1808 Diwan Mohkam Chand attacked Sialkot. The battle lasted for 19 days. The sardars were vanquished. Twenty-nine taluqas belonging to Sialkot were annexed. Jiwan Singh was given two villages as jagir.

Jit Singh Bhangi of Wainike

Wainike situated between Lahore and Amritsar was held by Jit Singh Bhangi. It was annexed on the death of its chief in 1812.

3. The Dallewalia Misl

Tara Singh Ghaiba (1710-1807) was the chief leader of this misl. His headquarter was at Rahon. He held considerable territory on both sides of the Satluj. He kept his treasure of 20 lakhs in the fort of Dakhni. Ranjit Singh attempted twice to seize it but failed. One of Tara Singh's sons, Gujar Singh, held the parganahs of Ghungrana and Baddowal, which were captured by Ranjit Singh in 1806. Tara Singh submitted to Ranjit Singh and fought for him in the battle of Naraingarh at the age of 97 in 1807 in which he was wounded. He died on his way back home at Morindah. Ranjit Singh seized all his territories including Rahon, the headquarters after a tough fight by his widow and property worth nearly one half crore of rupees. Rahon had nearly 600 shops. It was noted for the manufacture of cotton cloth called Bafta. There was considerable trade in sugar.

4. The Faizullahpuria or Singhpuria Misl

Budh Singh succeeded to the headship of this misl in 1794. His capital was Jalandhar. His territory lay on both sides of River Beas. In 1804 Ranjit Singh captured all his possessions and movable property in the Bari Doab. In return for it Ranjit Singh granted him some territory in the Cis-Satluj region in 1806. Budh Singh served under the Maharaja in the campaigns of Kasur, Jhang and Multan. Budh Singh used to dye his beard against the practice of Sikh religion. Ranjit Singh wanted to punish him.

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He was summoned to Lahore. On his delaying tactics, Ranjit Singh sent Diwan Mohkam Chand accompanied by Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and other sardars. They entered the Jalandhar Doab on 19 September, 1811. Budh singh fled to Ludhiana. His troops under Bhup Singh offered resistance for sometime. Jalandhar fell on 6 October, 1811. Dharamkot was seized from Tara Singh's son Dharam Singh and he was granted a small jagir.

Patti

Patti belonged to Budh Singh Faizullahpuria of Jalandhar. Patti is an old town. It is identified with Hiuen Tsang's "Chinapatti". This town lies in Amritsar district, 64 km south-east of Lahore and 46 km east of Kasur, on the highway between Lahore and Harikepatan. It was a walled town with brickbuilt houses and population of about 5,000, chiefly Mughals. This parganah contained, 1360 villages and fetched a revenue of nine lakhs of rupees. In winter its pools and ponds were frozen. Close to the town there was a fort consisting of a square enclosure of bricks with bastions at angles. It was surrounded by a mud wall. Ranjit Singh took possession of the fort, and more than 400 horses fell into his hands from the stud. On 7 October, 1811, the whole tract was entrusted to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia for administration. Amar Nath states that in 1815, Diwan Moti Ram and Faqir Aziz-ud-din realized Rs. 6,000 from Patti town.

Bajwara

It was held by Bhup Singh Faizullahpuria. In 1801 he was ousted by Raja Sansar Chand, who built a fort there. It fell to Ranjit Singh in 1825. This place was famous for muslin turbans.

5. The Kanahya Misl

Jai Singh Kanahya, head of the misl, died in 1793. The territories of the misl were first divided into two parts, one half went to Sada Kaur his daughter-in-law, and the other half to two sons of Jai Singh by another wife, Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh. The two brothers further subdivided their estates.

Sada Kaur

Sada Kaur lived at Batala and Mukerian. In 1803 Sada Kaur's territory near Hoshiarpur was attacked by Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. Ranjit Singh drove him away. Her daughter, Mahtab Kaur, was the first wife of

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Ranjit Singh. Towards the close of 1806, she went to Mukerian to live with her mother. In June, 1807 Ranjit Singh sent a force under Mohkam Chand to seize Dinanagar and a few other places belonging to Sada Kaur. The Diwan captured the places and acquired 9 guns, 7 elephants, 50 horses and about two lakhs of rupees in cash. Sada Kaur was enraged and the two personalities could not be reconciled afterwards.

In December, 1811, Ranjit Singh summoned Nidhan Singh to Lahore and imprisoned him. His territories, including the fort of Hajipur, and his property were confiscated. The other brother was also derprived of his taluqas and goods. Ten villages worth Rs. 6,000 a year were assigned to both of them.

Jaimal Singh Kanahya

Another leader of the Kanahya Misl was Jaimal Singh. He lived at Fatahgarh in Gurdaspur district. His fort of Pathankot was seized on 28 May, 1809. His daughter, Chand Kaur, was married to Ranjit Singh's son Kharak Singh, by his second wife Raj Kaur of the Nakai Misl, in February, 1812. It cost Jaimal Singh several lakhs of rupees. In August, 1812, his wife poisoned Jaimal Singh to death. His estates and property came into the possession of the Maharaja. The deceased had given most of his cash on interest to the bankers of Amritsar. They were all called upon to deposit the money in the State treasury in Gobindgarh fort at Amritsar. Jaimal Singh's parganahs of Bura Dala, Dowabi Kalan, Fatahgarh, Kalanaur, Mirthal, Nangal, Narota and Sangatgarh were annexed in August, 1812.

Quarrel with Sada Kaur

Sada Kaur demanded the same treatment for Sher Singh and Tara Singh as with Kharak Singh, and pressed the Maharaja to grant them jagirs as he had given to Kharak Singh. The Maharaja insisted that Sada Kaur should hand over her own territory to them. A serious rift began between the two indomitable personalities. Sada Kaur, realizing danger to her person, deputed her trusted maid servant, Shiam Kaur, to Ranjit Singh. On 1 January, 1811, Shiam Kaur placed the keys of various houses of the Rani before the Maharaja. She said that either the Maharaja should take possession of Rani's property or should make it over to his sons, Sher Singh and Tara Singh. Ranjit Singh replied that he would send for the Rani when he would visit Amritsar. He granted four garments for Sher Singh and Tara Singh each and one fine woollen shawl to Shiam Kaur and returned the keys.

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On 10 December, 1812, Sada Kaur met Ranjit Singh and said that a sum of Rs. 50,000 granted to her for the marriage of Sher Singh had been spent, and asked for more money. Ranjit Singh promised. Mahtab Kaur died about the middle of 1813. On 20 September, 1813, Sada Kaur pleaded with the Maharaja to grant jagirs for Sher Singh and Tara Singh. Ranjit Singh agreed to give something.

On Sada Kaur's repeated requests for jagirs to her grandsons, the Maharaja in 1813 said first she should give one half of her estates and property to them. Sada Kaur argued that in such a case the father's duty was greater than that of the children's maternal grandmother, particularly in view of the death of their mother and after all her property would go to them on her demise. The matter took a serious turn in October, 1820. The Maharaja ordered Sada Kaur to hand over half of her estates and property to Sher Singh and Tara Singh. Indirectly it implied surrendering her territory to the Maharaja. As she was at Lahore then, she was forced to execute a deed in favour of the two princes. On going back to Mukerian, she evaded compliance. In 1821 she was imprisoned.

Desa Singh Majithia at the head of a strong contingent was despatched to seize her estates and property. All other places were taken over easily except the fort of Atalgarh. Sada Kaur's maid servant in charge of this fort fought bravely for several weeks. Sada Kaur's estates in the Cis-Satluj region including Wadni near Moga were not resumed. But she was not allowed to go there, as in that event she would have defied Ranjit Singh publicly and vociferously. Sada Kaur was paid Rs. 10 daily to meet her expenses. "She bore the restraint of her confinement with great impatience, continually beating her breast in lamentation, and venting imprecations on the head of her ungrateful son-in-law". She died in 1828. It was after Sada Kaur's death that Ranjit Singh granted the title of Kanwar to Sher Singh, while Tara Singh remained neglected.

Sada Kaur was one of the most remarkable ladies in Sikh history. Having become a widow in her early twenties she controlled the fortunes of the Kanahya Misl most ably and successfully. She was the builder of the power of her great son-in-law. She was a very dominating personality extremely ambitious for power. She came into conflict with her equally ambitious son-in-law. In it she proved an earthen jar against an iron vessel, and suffered most miserably. She did not deserve this fate, but kingship knew no kinship. Man intoxicated with absolute power generally forgets that there is a higher law of Nature which should not be thwarted. Ranjit Singh should have waited, and after her death her territory and property belonged to him. Did not the British authorities give full control

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and full freedom to Rani Daya Kanwar of Ambala?

The common people of her own times were unanimously of the view that "She was a wonderful woman, valient in battle, wise in durbar", and that she was a good and benevolent ruler. To her proud spirit a prison and a grave were the same. The cruel treatment meted out to her was absolutely unjustified.

Sujanpur

Having expelled Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra from the territory of Rani Sada Kaur, situated at the foot of the hills, in March, 1803, Ranjit Singh could not go back to Lahore empty handed. He attacked Sujanpur situated 7 km north-west of Pathankot at the foot of the hills below Nurpur. It was held by Budh Singh Bhagat. He submitted without offering any resistance, paid tribute, gave one gun, and surrendered three thanas of Bahrampur, Dharamkot and Sukhalgarh. In May, 1812, Ranjit Singh, while on a tour of the Kangra hills, seized Sujanpur from Budh Singh Bhagat.

6. The Karorasinghia Misl

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Baghel Singh was the most powerful leader of this misl. His territories lay on both sides of rivers Bias, Satluj and Yamuna. He controlled Delhi for nine months and there constructed seven Gurdwaras. Once Emperor Shah Alam II had offered him governorship of the Ganga doab, but the offer was not accepted. He died in 1805. His parganahs of Sirhali, Sobraon and Tarn Taran[1] were annexed by the Maharaja immediately after his death.

Baghel Singh's first wife Ram Kaur lived at Hariana near Hoshiarpur. In 1806 Ranjit Singh seized Ram Kaur's entire territory and property including 24 lakhs of rupees in cash, elephants, horses, guns, and household goods. She was granted the village of Bahadurpur near Hoshiarpur for subsistence. His second wife, Rup Kaur lived at Chhalondi in Karnal district. His third wife Ratan Kaur lived at Kalaur in the same district. In 1806 Ranjit Singh deprived them of most of their estates. Only one village was left with Rup Kaur. In 1808, the Maharaja seized Kalaur

[1] Tarn Taran is a sacred place of the Sikhs. Its large tank, 100 metres square, was built by Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. It stands 22 km from Amritsar on the road to Harikepatan in the heart of the Majha, the homeland of the founders of Sikh misls. Once a month on the day of Amavash, two days before the new moon, thousands of people bathe in the tank.

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including her entire cash amounting to 24 Lakhs and 4 guns. Ratan Kaur was granted one village for maintenance. In 1810 Ram Kaur was expelled from Bahadurpur near Hoshiarpur. She escaped to Ludhiana. Through the intercession of Colonel Ochterlony she obtained the village Khurdin in Karnal district which had been usurped by Jodh Singh of Kalsia of Chhachhrauli.

7. The Nakai Misl

Ranjit Singh married Bhagwan Singh Nakai's sister, Raj Kaur, in 1797. In 1802 this lady gave birth to Kharak Singh. In 1803 Ranjit Singh seized all the territories of Bhagwan Singh. In May, 1811, a force was despatched under Prince Kharak Singh accompanied by Diwan Mohkam Chand, to take possession of the remaining territories of other sardars of the Nakai Misl, and this misl was liquidated. The fort of Karangli situated in the Nakka country was annexed at this time.

8. The Nishanwala Misl

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Rani Daya Kaur, head of Nishanwala Misl, ruled over her estates of Ambala and Mulana remakably well. "She was an excellent ruler and her estate was one of the best managed in the Protected Territory". In November 1808, Ranjit Singh's fury fell on this innocent woman. He drove her away from Ambala city, usurped all her territory, treasure and other property. The Maharaja then squeezed money from Shahabad Markanda. He advanced to Thaneswar and forced Bhanga Singh of Karorasinghia Misl, the most ferocious of all the Sikh sardars, to submit. Finding the British army ready to face him at Karnal and Charles Metcalfe behind him at Malerkotla, Ranjit Singh returned to Amritsar. Daya Kaur was restored to her authority by the British after the Treaty of 1809.

9. The Ramgarhia Misl

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was the greatest leader of the Ramgarhia Misl. He died in April, 1803. He had four brothers, all of whom had died during his lifetime. Two of his nephews were Bir Singh and Diwan Singh. Diwan Singh went to Banaras on pilgrimage. On his return in 1808 he was imprisoned and his lands and property were confiscated. Under pressure from Charhat Singh Bedi, the Maharaja granted him a jagir.

Jassa Singh's son Jodh Singh was a powerful chief. Ranjit Singh took

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Jodh Singh to Amritsar. In the Hari Mandar before the holy *Granth* they took solemn oaths of lasting brotherhood. Ranjit Singh placed on the written agreement his right hand palm dyed with saffron. Jodh Singh served him in several campaigns. On one occasion the Maharaja brought large presents to offer in exchange of turbans with him. Jodh Singh declined saying: "It will be a great favour of Your Highness to allow me to keep my own turban and my head into the bargain".

Jodh Singh died in August, 1815. All his estates and property were seized. About 150 forts of the Ramgarhias were razed to the ground. Some valuable grants were made for the subsistence of Jodh Singh's three sons. When they were coming to the durbar to pay their respects to the Maharaja in November, 1816, without any suspicion, they were seized and their jagirs, worth five lakhs of rupees annually, were annexed.

10. The Shahid Misl

The headquarters of Shahid Misl were at Damdama Sahib. Kesari in Ambala tahsil and Shahzadpur 10 km west of Naraingarh were their other territories. Ranjit Singh was at Shahzadpur in 1807. The Shahids were held in such high esteem by the whole Sikh people that Ranjit Singh refrained from molesting them.

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11. The Sukarchakia Misl

Dal Singh of Akalgarh and Eminabad

The previous name of Akalgarh was Alipur. It belonged to Chatha Pathans. The Sikhs on capturing it called it Akalgarh. Dal Singh of Akalgarh was Mahan Singh's maternal uncle. He was a supporter of Sahib Singh of Gujrat who was married to Mahan Singh's sister. Mahan Singh as well as Ranjit Singh tried to reduce Sahib Singh to a subordinate position. Dal Singh did not like it and criticised Ranjit Singh. After sometime Dal Singh was arrested and imprisoned. Sahib Singh and his son-in-law, Jodh Singh Wazirabadia, got ready to fight. Baba Keshra Singh, a holy man, brought about a compromise. Dal Singh was set free, but he died shortly afterwards in 1804 due to his shameful treatment by his old ward. It was this man who had poisoned to death Ranjit Singh's mother. Akalgarh and Eminabad were immediately annexed. Dal Singh's widow was granted two villages for her maintenance.

Comment

The Trans-Satluj Sikh misls except Ahluwalia came to and end. It

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escaped absorption due to sheer good luck. In Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa every Sikh was independent. A Sikh leader commanding allegiance of half a dozen Sikhs was always prepared to challenge the authority of a Sikh sardar in command of thousands of Sikhs. Ranjit Singh curbed this attitude and tendency with an iron hand, and unified the Trans-Satluj Sikhs into a compact body respecting order and discipline. In 1809 Charles Metcalfe had noted the spirit of indiscipline among Ranjit Singh's courtiers. In 1827 Captain Wade witnessed "the order and regularity of the whole assembly, the deference with which they treated the Maharaja and the courtesy they observed towards each other. There was no rude familiarity and confusion; everyone seemed to know his place and to be conscious of the station he filled". In 1848 Cunningham wrote: "Ranjit Singh laboured with more or less intelligent design to give unity and coherence to diverse atoms and scattered elements; to mould the increasing Sikh nation into a well-ordered State or Commonwealth as Gobind had developed a sect into a people".

Without subjugating the Sikhs, and without unifying them into a solid body, the Sikhs would have remained like Rajputs, another great martial class, as petty landlords and peasants. The entire Panjab might have passed under the British in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Ranjit Singh converted the Sikhs from a lawless people into a ruling race.

Ranjit Singh may be called faithless, and ruthless, and on some occasions he did deserve this charge. But study world history, ancient, medieval and modern. Was there no breach of faith? Ranjit Singh was not a bloodthirsty tyrant. He showed great consideration and kindness to the fallen foe. He invariably provided him with a decent living as a common citizen of the State. It may also be pointed out that he never killed anyone of his opponents or rivals during his forty years of absolute rule. Ranjit Singh thus raised the standard of monarchy on the ruins of the Sikh Commonwealth.

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CHAPTER 4

Subjugation of Hindu and Muslim Chiefs

Besides the Sikhs there were many chiefs,
Who cherished Hindu and Muslim beliefs.
They could not uphold their ground,
Accepted vassalage as policy sound.

As long as the Sikh sardars were victims of Ranjit Singh's aggression, Hindu and Muslim chiefs considered it an act of pillage of one brigand by another. They failed to realize that the man at the helm of affairs would make no distinction between man and man and would treat them all alike. It meant that the ruler who could be hard upon his own kith and kin would not spare them.

As regards the petty chiefs, there was no need for the Maharaja to go to war with them. He went often on a tour of the country. He was always accompanied by a huge army as well as by all the subdued chiefs, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. The small chieftains were overawed by this cavalcade. They quietly submitted, offered some gifts and promised recruits when required. The others yielded after some resistance.

According to the old Hindu tradition, the rulers held an inspection of their troops, removed deficiencies, and planned their military exploits for the coming year. The old Hindu sages had dedicated the Dasahra festival which lasted for ten days for this purpose to Kshatriya rulers called Rajputs. Dasahra marked the beginning of winter which was the best period for warfare. Ranjit Singh followed the same practice.

A brief account of Ranjit Singh's subjugation of Hindu and Muslim chiefs is given below.

Akhnur

In April-May, 1812, Kharak Singh and Diwan Mohkam Chand

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subdued Akhnur and Jammu. Ranjit Singh granted these places as jagir to Kharak Singh, who entrusted the administration to his guardian and estates manager Bhayya Ram Singh.

Awans

The Awans were widely scattered in the districts of Rawalpindi, Jehlam and Shahpur, and they could not offer a united resistance to the Sikhs. They were brought under subjection by Diwan Mohkam Chand in 1813, after the battle of Haidru.

Bambas

Diwan Amar Nath says that according to popular belief Bamba-Kakka tribes were the descendants of Alexander's Greek soldiers who had deserted him and had settled in the lower Kashmir hills. They were called the "two sisters" of mountaineers of Northern Panjab allied closely to each other. In medieval times most of them had embraced Islam while some of them retained Hinduism. In fact, they formed a branch of the Chibhali tribe. The Bambas lived on the right bank of the Jehlam river in the hills, while the Kakkas lived on the left bank opposite them along the southern borders of Kashmir. The headquarters of Bambas was at Muzaffarabad. Diwan Mohkam Chand conquered Bambas in 1811, and annexed their territory to the Lahore kingdom.

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Bannu

The Bannu district occupied an area of 1,670 square miles of plain country lying between the hills of Waziristan and the Indus river. It is watered by the Kurram and Tochi rivers. There is very little rainfall, and cultivation depends entirely on irrigation. In 1823 Ranjit Singh crossed the River Indus at the head of a large army, marched through Isakhail and Marwat without opposition, and advanced upto the neighbourhood of Bannu town. After spending a month or so in the region, he retired without planting a Sikh garrison.

The Maharaja conquered Bannu in 1825, but assigned it to the Nawab of Derah Ismail Khan on payment of an annual tribute of Rs. 60,000. It could be collected only with the help of troops. In 1832, Tara Singh, at the head of 2,000 irregular cavlary with 4 small guns, was sent to restore peace and order there. He was surrounded by a large number of Bannuchis assisted by 4 to 5 thousand wild Waziris. The Maharaja sent a fresh force to help Tara Singh under Alexander Gardner. Fighting lasted for about four months. All the grain crops, gardens, fruit trees, orchards,

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forts and villages were destroyed, and the rebels were driven away.

In 1835 the Waziris gathered in Bannu in large numbers. Afridis of Kohat and Khaibar Pass were also to join them. Ranjit Singh despatched a force of 5,000 to Bannu. The Bannuchis remained peaceful, but the Waziris of Khunigram gave them no rest day or night for nearly four months. The Maharaja had given strict orders not to enter the Waziristan hills.

In 1836 the control of the Nawab of Derah Ismail Khan was ended, and Bannu was brought under the direct control of Lahore. The Marwats never offered a united resistance to the Sikhs. On their approach some of them fled into the hills with their flocks and herds. The others who remained behind paid some money or grain or gave goats fixed upon every village or *tappa*.

In 1838 the Sikh force in Bannu was obliged to retire across River Indus with heavy losses. The Maharaja ordered Raja Suchait Singh and Prince Nau Nihal Singh to proceed to Bannu. They fought for two or three months with several thousand Bannuchis and Waziris. The forts in all the villages were destroyed and the Waziris were driven back into the hills. The Nawab of Tank fled into Waziristan hills to Sarwargarh. He was pursued, but he escaped to Ghazni.

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Bars

From Chiniot in the beginning of 1803, Ranjit Singh advanced farther to the north-west. According to Wade he advanced as far as Rawalpindi. On his way he obtained tributes from the chiefs of jungle tracts called Bars situated between the Chenab and the Jehlam rivers. The Nawabs of Sahiwal, Shahpur and Khushab lying along the banks of River Jehlam easily submitted.

Basohli

The small hill state of Basohli near Jasrota quietly agreed to pay tribute of Rs. 8,000 per annum to Ranjit Singh in 1808.

Bhakkar and Leiah

Hafiz Ahmad Khan, chief of Bhakkar and Leiah, was visited by Ranjit Singh in the beginning of 1816. On his refusal to pay tribute his forts of Khangarh and Mahmudkot were seized.

Leiah is situated in Muzaffargarh district on the high bank Indus east of the river.

Bhakkar lies in Mianwali district opposite Derah Ism

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north of Leiah on the eastern side of the Indus. Both the places were brought directly under the Lahore Durbar in 1821.

Bhera

Bhera was the most notable town in the west Panjab. It produced eminent leaders in every walk of life. The original town stood on the right bank of River Jehlam. It was sacked and destroyed first by Mahmud of Ghazni and later by Chingiz Khan. Afterwards it sprang up on the left bank opposite its old site. Babar spared it for a ransom of two lakhs of rupees. Babar considered Bhera so important that he defined the extent of his empire from Bhera to Bihar. In the second half of the eighteenth century, it was burnt by Ahmad Shah Durrani's general Nur-ud-din. It again rose on its ashes due to the encouragement given by Bhangi sardars. It was surrounded by a wall, partly made of mud and partly of bricks with eight gates. Some of its buildings were adorned by exquisite wood work. The town was surrounded by several gardens, of which Thanewala and the other containing the tomb of Mian Saeed Muhammad were notable. It had a flourishing trade in cotton. Ranjit Singh annexed it without any opposition.

Bhimbar

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Bhimbar was a small town containing about 1,000 low and flat-roofed houses and nearly 150 shops. It is situated about 66 km from the confluence of River Chenab and Bhimbar. It lay on the road from Lahore to Kashmir via Bahramgala Pass. Its Muslim chief was called Raja who lived there in a castle.

Ranjit Singh seized Gujrat from Sahib Singh Bhangi in December, 1810. Raja Sultan Khan of Bhimbar was Sahib Singh's tributary. Ranjit Singh invited Sultan Khan to attend his court at Lahore. The Raja feared imprisonment and evaded compliance. The Maharaja despatched two battalions under Faqir Aziz-ud-din. Sultan Khan suddenly assaulted them and gunned down 600 men of the Lahore Durbar. He fled away into the higher mountains. The Faqir appointed Ismail Khan, a relative of Sultan Khan, as the head of the government, and returned to Lahore. Sultan Khan came back to Bhimbar, slew Ismail Khan and resumed his authority. In March, 1812, Ranjit Singh sent a larger force under Kharak Singh and Diwan Mohkam Chand to punish Sultan Khan. On reaching the vicinity of Bhimbar, the Diwan opened negotiations for a peaceful surrender. Mohkam Chand was well-known as a successful general. The Raja considering discretion as the better part of valour quietly submitted,

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and accompanied the Diwan to Lahore at the head of a small force of his own in 1812.

Ranjit Singh received him with great distinction. He was offered a chair by him, made a *sirwarna* of Rs. 525. It implied waving money over his head and distributed in alms. It signified great honour shown to a high dignitary. He was granted an elephant with a silver howdah and a horse with a golden saddle. He was given a mansion to live in with a handsome allowance and was made a regular *durbari* (courtier). After sometime Sultan Khan sent back his escort to Bhimbar. Sultan Khan was at once imprisoned. His territory was annexed. In 1819 Sultan Khan was set free. He accompanied Missar Diwan Chand during his expedition to Kashmir and guided him through the mountains into the valley.

Raja Gulab Singh had an eye on Kashmir. With that object in view he wanted to control all the Muslim principalities of Akhnur, Bhimbar, Rajauri, Punchh and Hazara. He imprisoned Sultan Khan in the fort of Riasi where he died in 1838. In 1828 Ranjit Singh assigned Bhimbar to Raja Dhian Singh.

Bilaspur

The territory of the Kahlur State lay on both sides of River Satluj, and its capital Bilaspur was situated on the British side of the river. At this place the river emerges from the middle ranges of the Himalayas into the valleys of the Shivalik hills. In 1835 Baron Charles Hugel wrote:

> The valley is extremely fertile and every tropical plant flourishes in richer profusion here than in most other parts of Hindustan as if the Great Author of All Nature had lavished his gifts on it without any reserve.

Desa Singh Majithia was the governor of Kangra hills. Under instructions of Ranjit Singh he demanded tribute from Raja Mahan Chand of Bilaspur. On his refusal Desa Singh threatened military action and asked Raja Sansar Chand to join him. Mahan Chand invited Bir Singh of Nurpur who was then living in Baghat (Solan) territory. Bir Singh was forbidden to respond to Mahan Chand's invitation by the British Government.

On 23 March, 1819, two hundred soldiers of Desa Singh under Kakkar Mal crossed River Satluj between Bilaspur and Makhowal and occupied 26 villages of Bilaspur including two forts of Basi and Bachhartu in the Cis-Satluj region. On 26 March, 1819, Mangat Singh's troops of the

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Lahore Durbar fired musket shots on Bilaspur town from the trans-Satluj side of the river. Kakkar Mal refused to listen to the protests of the British agent Ross conveyed through a messenger. Ross arrived at Bilaspur with the Nusseeree Battalion from Subathu. Desa Singh's deputy met Ross and apologised. Desa Singh withdrew his troops to the trans-Satluj side and paid compensation to the inhabitants who had suffered. Ochterlony conveyed his displeasure to Ranjit Singh telling him that it was a sheer violation of the Treaty of 1809. Ranjit Singh reprimanded Desa Singh. Mahan Chand agreed to pay a sum of Rs. 4,000 annually as tribute for his trans-Satluj possessions in 1820.

Chamba

The town of Chamba lies on the right bank of River Ravi in the hills at the foot of a high mountain peak. Vigne described it in 1839 thus: "The town is built around a rectangular mydan, or green, about 500 paces in length and about 80 in breadth, and stands about 3,000 feet above the sea. The houses, about 1,000 in number, are low, and built of wood, the roofs being of the same material. The population at a guess, may be from 4,000 to 5,000". Vigne further observed:

> "The inhabitants of all neighbouring states are to be seen at this interesting place. The universal Kashmirian, the dirty Ladaki, with his Hussar cap and iron tobacco pipe, the curiously capped Burmari, and the Hindus of the lower ranges of the Panjab, may have come thither upon business, but are often to be observed idling upon the green, and amongst them are the more gaudily attired attendants of the Rajah, on foot or on horseback, and occasionally the women from the village called Ronal, at the foot of the Ziruk Pass, who are remarkable as being the only females in the hills who wear a turban."

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The Chamba State, now a district of Himachal Pradesh, measures about 110 km in length and 80 km in breadth. It covered an area of 3,300 square miles. It was well known for its salubrious climate, fresh and dried fruit and handwoven woollen fabrics. The Raja of Chamba accepted Ranjit Singh's supremacy without any opposition for an annual tribute of Rs. 8,000 in 1807.

Chibs

The Chibs, a Rajput clan, lay scattered in lower hilly regions of Kangra, Jammu and Gujrat. In Gujrat and parts of Jammu they had

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become Musalmans. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, after seizing Gujrat in 1810, attacked Umar Khan, Chib chief of Mangla, and annexed his territory.

Datarpur

Datarpur was a small state situated in a tract in the Dasuya tahsil of Hoshiarpur district. It was an offshoot of Siba, a state of the Kangra group. In 1786, it came under the control of Sansar Chand from whom it passed to Ranjit Singh by conquest in 1809. On 2 August, 1815, at Lahore, a representative of the Raja of Datarpur offered a *nazar* of Rs. 2 to Ranjit Singh and said he had brought Rs. 2,000 being the balance of his revenue tax. He was told to deliver the money to Rama Nand Sahu. In 1818, Govind Chand, Raja of Datarpur, died. His territory was annexed and his son was granted a jagir.

Derah Ghazi Khan

The town of Derah Ghazi Khan lies 3 km west of the Indus. The place was of considerable importance as it lay on the main route from Central Asia and Afghanistan to Western India. On 16 May, 1817, Nawab Shahbaz Khan, chief of the district, was asked by the Maharaja to pay one lakh of rupees as tribute. Diwan Bhawani Das was sent to realize the amount. On 25 May, 1817, a letter was addressed to the Diwan warning him that if he returned without realizing in full the revenue tax from the Nawab, he would be compelled to pay up the balance from his own resources. On the Nawab's refusal, Bhawani Das plundered Kichar territory of the district and sent thousands of camels laden with grain from that place to Khanpur to be sold there. Towards the close of 1819, Ranjit Singh undertook a tour of the south-west Panjab. He annexed the district and farmed it to the Nawab of Bahawalpur for 4½ lakhs of rupees annually. After sometime the amount was raised to Rs. 6 lakhs. On the failure of the Nawab to pay the full amount punctually, the district was taken up under the direct control of the Lahore Durbar in 1820. It was first placed under General Ventura and afterwards under Diwan Sawan Mal.

Derah Ismail Khan

This district is situated on the western bank of the River Indus. Its area was 3,780 square miles. It was the southernmost district of the province of Peshawar. The town was a great centre of trade, particularly in grain and salt. It was annexed on 9 November, 1821. In January, 1822, Ranjit Singh made it over to Nawab Hafiz Ahmad Khan. Isakhail fell in 1823. The Nawab died in 1825, and was succeeded by his 32-year-old son Sher

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Muhammad Khan. He ruled from 1825 to 1836, but he took little interest in administration. In 1836 he voluntarily retired into private life on receiving a handsome jagir. Diwan Lakhi Mal was appointed its kardar. The people of this region were "notorious robbers, assailing the weak and outwitting the strong". Khasor was the most important tribe living there.

Gakhars

The Gakhars inhabited Gujrat, Jehlam, Rawalpindi and Hazara districts all along the plateaus just below the lower Himalayan hills from Jehlam down to Haripur in Hazara. Briggs, says that the Gakhars were "much given to polyandry and infanticide".[1] Thomson describes them as "compact, sinewy, and vigorous, but not large boned; making capital, soldiers and the best light cavalry in upper India, proud and self-respecting, but not first-class agriculturists, with no contempt for labour, since many work as coolies on the railway; but preferring service in the army or police". They were Shias, while all the other tribes in the region were Sunnis. They possessed 454 villages in Wangli parganah, 333 villages in Pharwala and 242 villages in Akbarabad. Their stronghold on the River Jehlam was Ramkot. Other important centres belonging to them were at Askandral, Bakrala, Domeli and Lahri. They became tributary to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1818.

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Haripur

In January, 1814, Raja Bhup Singh of the hill territory of Haripur was summoned to Lahore and was imprisoned. Then his territory and property were seized, and a small jagir was given to him for his subsistence.

Jammu

Jammu is situated at a height of 1,200 feet on an elevated ground on the right bank of River Tawi – a tributary of River Chenab. On its left bank there was a fort, about 150 feet above the stream. Jammu is 36 km from Sialkot, now in Pakistan. It was once the seat of a dynasty of Rajputs who ruled over a large territory in the hills as well as in the plains.

Formerly Jammu was tributary to the Sukarchakia Misl, but the tribute had not been paid for many years. Diwan Amar Nath says that on his return from Bhasin, in 1800 Ranjit Singh thought of annexing Jammu. On his way he conquered Mirowal in Sialkot district and realized a tribute of Rs. 8,000 from Narowal. He then laid siege to Chaprar. Ranjit

[1] *Ferishta*, I, 183 f.

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Singh called upon the garrison to surrender. On their refusal he stormed the mud fort and captured it. Though not cruel by nature, he wanted to teach a lesson to others, and massacred all the inhabitants. In consequence the Raja of Jammu submitted without any opposition and offered a *nazarana* of Rs. 20,000 in cash together with elephants and jewellery. In 1809 Bhawani Das conquered Jammu, and it became a part of Ranjit Singh's kingdom. Jamadar Khushhal Singh was its first governor. In 1818, Jammu was assigned to Gulab Singh for an annual tribute of Rs. 4 lakhs.

Jasrota

Jasrota was a small state situated in the outer ranges of the Shivalik hills about 65 km from Jammu and 45 km from Pathankot. It occupied a fertile tract of land. Its rulers were powerful and often came into conflict with the Rajas of Jammu. Ranjit Singh in 1808 marched from Pathankot to Jasrota. The ruling chief, Ranbir Singh, tendered his allegiance and became tributary after paying a large *nazarana* of Rs. 8,000. Raja Ranbir Singh died without a male issue. His brother, Bhuri Singh succeeded him. In 1834, the ruling family was driven out and the state of Jasrota was conferred upon Raja Hira Singh as a jagir. The old family began to live at Khanpur near Nagrota.

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Jaswan

Jaswan, commonly called Jaswan Dun, is a valley in Una district intervening between the Shivalik hills and the outer Himalayan range. The Soan river flows along its whole length. The town of Una is situated in its centre. The valley was the seat of an ancient Rajput family, Jaswal, closely allied to the royal Katoch house of Kangra. Raja Umed Singh Jaswal was deprived of all his possessions in January, 1816, and he was granted a jagir worth Rs.12,000 a year. The taluqas of Rajpura and Nathi (Doti?) of Jaswan territory were made over to Raja Sansar Chand.

Jhang

The Sials of Jhang were converted Muslim Rajputs. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Ahmad Khan Sial was the chief of Jhang, under Bhangi sardars of Chiniot. In 1803 Ranjit Singh accompanied by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, led an expedition against it. Ahmad Khan agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 60,000. Two years later in the winter of 1805 the Maharaja again invaded Jhang. Just then the Maharaja received the news of the approach towards Lahore of Maratha sardar Jaswant Rao Holkar, and the Pindari chief Amir Khan. He captured the fort and Ahmad Khan

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escaped to Multan. The Maharaja farmed out the district to Sardar Fatah Singh Kalianwala for Rs. 60,000 a year and returned to Lahore. Prinsep says the district was assigned to Sukh Dayal for Rs.1,60,000 annually. It might have been a later development.

Sometime afterwards Ahmad Khan returned with a Pathan force given to him by Muzaffar Khan, Nawab of Multan. He recovered a great part of his territory. The Maharaja confirmed him on his agreeing to pay Rs. 60,000. In 1810 Ahmad Khan was captured at Serai Sidhu and was taken to Lahore, while his son Inayat Khan fled to Haidarabad in Sind. Ahmad Khan was promised release from prison if he would recall his son and leave him at Lahore as security for his good behaviour. This was done, and Ahmad Khan was set free in 1817 and granted a jagir of Rs.12,000 at Wirowal in Amritsar district. Ahmad Khan died in 1820.

Inayat Khan received a jagir worth Rs. 3,000 in addition to Wirowal. These jagirs were exchanged in 1823 for one of the same value at Serai Sidhu in Multan district. In 1830 this jagir was exchanged for a jagir at Mastanwali in Leiah. In 1838 Inayat Khan was killed near Rasulpur, fighting on the side of Diwan Sawan Mal against Raja Gulab Singh. His brother Muhammad Ismail Khan was given a pension of Rs. 100 per mensem.

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Kakkas

The Kakkas were a branch of the greater tribe of the Chibhalis. They inhabited the left bank of River Jehlam opposite Bambas between Gingal and Muzaffarabad, and up the lower part of the Kishan Ganga valley. The Kakkas were a strong and bold people, but somewhat surly of temper. According to one opinion they are wrongly grouped with Bambas. Diwan Mohkam Chand conquered them in 1811, and annexed their territory to Ranjit Singh's kingdom. The country of Bambas and Kakkas was farmed out to Sahib Singh Bedi. In order to make these people peaceful inhabitants, the Bedi hanged their holy man, a Faquir, who was held in high esteem by these two tribes.

Kalabagh

It is picturesquely situated at the foot of the Salt Range on the left bank of the River Indus where the river debouches from the hills, 170 km below Attock. Salt was the main mineral wealth of the place. Kalabagh with an area of 107 square miles was annexed by Ranjit Singh in 1822; but Malak Allahyar Khan was allowed to keep it as a feudatory of the Sikh Government.

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Kangra

Kangra town is situated in the lower ranges of the Shivalik hills, at a height of 2,345 feet above sea level. It commands a fine view of the Kangra valley which is 125 km long and nearly 60 km broad. The town is noted for the temple of Goddess Rajeshwari and the fort is situated on the top of an eminence 150 feet above River Ban Ganga. The last Mughal governor of the place, Saif Ali Khan, died in 1774, and the fort of Kangra fell into the hands of Jai Singh Kanahya. By the Treaty of Malaown on 15 May, 1815, between the British and Amar Singh Thapa, the hills between the Satluj and the Yamuna had passed under the control of the former. Thereby the British and Ranjit Singh became immediate neighbours in the hills as they had been by the Treaty of Amritsar in the plains. By that time Ranjit Singh had occupied Nadaun, Nurpur, Jaswan and Guler, and had made Mandi, Suket, Kulu and Chamba tributaries. Chamba was made tributary in 1808-9, Mandi in 1809, Kulu in 1810 and Bilaspur in 1817. Guler was annexed in 1811-13, Nurpur in 1815-16 and Trans-Satluj Bushahar in 1837-39.

Raja Sansar Chand Katoch was the head of the noblest Rajput dynasty in Kangra hills. He was highly respected for his ancient heritage. Sansar Chand took possession of the Kangra fort in 1785. He then began to subdue the hill states lying between the Ravi and the Satluj. He defeated the Raja of Bilaspur. Sansar Chand also tried to extend his authority into the plains of Hoshiarpur district, and occupied Bajwara in 1803. This region belonged to Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh and the Raja was driven back to Nadaun.

When Ranjit Singh was acquiring territory in the plains of the Panjab, Sansar Chand was restoring his authority in the Shivalik hills, the British were establishing their supremacy over Haryana, and the famous Gorkha general Amar Singh Thapa was setting up the Nepalese rule over the Himalayan states situated between rivers Ghagra and the Beas. Amar Singh's father Bhim Sen Thapa was the Prime Minister of Nepal. Amar Singh wished to win glory and greatness for himself, his father and the country. With this aim he began to extend Gorkha dominion in the western hills. In 1794 he conquered Kumaon lying between Ghagra and the Ganga. He subdued Garhwal state situated between the Ganga and the Yamuna. The Garhwal ruler was related to the Raja of Bilaspur. Through him he invited Amar Singh Thapa for help against Raja Sansar Chand. The Raja of Sirmaur submitted without fighting and got a rebellion in his State suppressed by Amar Singh. The Raja of Nalagarh opposed his advance, but he was defeated. Sansar Chand entered into

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friendly correspondence with Lord Lake who was then halting on the Beas near Amritsar, but no diplomatic or political relations were established. By this time Amar Singh had subdued twelve major and eighteen minor chiefships in the hills. The Gorkha troops were stationed at all important places, 1,600 at Nahan, 2,000 at Arki and 1,650 at other pickets. Amar Singh crossed River Satluj in December, 1805. Sansar Chand fell back. The Raja of Bilaspur joined Amar Singh. Both armies entered Kangra territory. Sansar Chand fought a hard battle against the Gorkhas at Mahalmarian in May, 1806, but he was repulsed. Amar Singh laid siege to the fort of Kangra. Sansar Chand's defeat was mainly due to his dismissal of his Rajput soldiers and recruitment of Rohilla Afghans in their place at the suggestion of Ghulam Muhammad Rohilla who was living as a refugee with him.

After his settlement with Holkar and Lake, Ranjit Singh was hunting wild animals like boars and panthers in the jungles of Hoshiarpur district. Fatah Chand, brother of Raja Sansar Chand, met Ranjit Singh and sought help against Amar Singh. Ranjit Singh demanded the fort of Kangra as his fees. Sansar Chand's entire ambition was concentrated on the fort which was his family's pride and his most precious patrimony. He did not agree. Then the Raja met Jaswant Rao Holkar at Jawalamukhi where he had gone after his settlement with Lord Lake. The Maratha chief turned down his request.

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The Gorkhas continued the siege and destruction of the country. Some local chieftains and rowdy elements in the population took to plunder and murder. The beautiful Kangra hills and dales were ruined. This state of affairs lasted for three years. The *Kangra District Gazetteer* states:

> The people, harassed and bewildered, fled to the neighbouring kingdoms, some to Chamba, some to the plains of the Jullundur Doab – not a blade of cultivation was to be seen. Grass grew up in the towns and tigresses whelped in the streets of Nadaun.

After the Treaty of Amritsar, Ranjit Singh visited Jawalamukhi, in May, 1809, partly to pay respects to the Goddess, and partly to study the situation in Kangra. Amar Singh tried to win him over by proposing to conquer Kashmir jointly and to share its possession half and half. Ranjit Singh did not trust him.

In this long campaign Sansar Chand's resources had been exhausted. Besides, he was hard pressed to secure liberation of his family from the fort of Kangra. He opened negotiations with Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja

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repeated his old demand. Sansar Chand agreed on 18 August, 1809, and sent his son Anirodh Chand as a surety. Ranjit Singh surrounded the Gorkha army which had besieged the fort. He cut off their supplies completely. Besides cholera broke out in the Gorkha camp. Amar Singh offered a bribe of one lakh of rupees to Ranjit Singh to allow him to retire unmolested. Amar Singh raised the siege. The Gorkhas were allowed to depart with all their property and arms. The Maharaja was shrewd enough not to see another formidable state of Gorkhas being established on his northern frontiers. The English alone were enough on his eastern boundary to cause him sleepless nights. The Maharaja expelled Sansar Chand's men, and took possession of the fort on 24 August, 1809. Sansar Chand was left in possession of his territory on payment of a fixed tribute. Ranjit Singh stayed at Kangra upto 30 September, 1809. The Gorkhas were completely cleared out of Kangra hills west of the Satluj. Tributes were settled on various principalities. Diwan Mohkam Chand was appointed governor with Desa Singh Majithia as his deputy. As the Diwan was required for other expeditions, the full charge of Kangra hills was entrusted to Desa Singh.

The defeat at Kangra was rankling in the mind of Amar Singh. He tried to seek British help in conquering Panjab. The British Government rejected his overtures. They also conveyed their displeasure to the Raja of Patiala for his willingness to help Amar Singh Thapa against Ranjit Singh. During the Gorkha war of 1814-16, Amar Singh applied to Ranjit Singh for assistance against the English. The Maharaja gave no reply.

Sansar Chand's revenues amounted to eight lakhs annually. He paid to Ranjit Singh two lakhs. He maintained two trained and disciplined battalions under a European Officer, an artillery man named Jackson, a deserter from the British army.

The loss of Kangra fort, the pride and prestige of his family, kept him despondent during the remainder of his life. Ranjit Singh treated him with great respect. Whenever he visited the Lahore Durbar, the Maharaja stood up to receive him. This gave him little consolation. In vain did he seek British protection.

In 1816 he wrote to his friend Bhambu Khan of Rampur (U.P.) to secure him British protection against Ranjit Singh. He promised complete submission to the British Government. In return he wanted a written assurance from the Governor-General that in the event of British occupation of Trans-Satluj Panjab, his fort of Kangra and other hill territories, now in possession of Ranjit Singh, should be restored to him. Bhambu Khan recommended that in an emergency Sansar Chand would

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join the British army with ten to twenty thousand troops. The Governor-General replied that Sansar Chand's request implied that the British Government aimed at conquering the Panjab. In fact, they were on friendly terms with Ranjit Singh. Nevertheless, if any occasion arose, the British Government would be pleased to show its goodwill towards him. Metcalfe was instructed to convey the Governor-General's reply to Sansar Chand in a manner it should not come to the notice of Ranjit Singh. In 1821 Sansar Chand sent some rare hill birds as presents to the Governor-General. He was informed that the Governor-General knew of the Raja's attachment to the British, but he would not encourage exchange of presents to avoid any suspicion of Ranjit Singh. The Raja was asked to send letters occasionally through the Resident at Delhi. Sansar Chand died in December, 1824.

Anirodh Chand succeeded him. Succession duty was demanded from him by the Maharaja. On his delaying tactics he was summoned to Dinanagar in the summer camp of Ranjit Singh. Faqir Aziz-ud-din advised him to obey the orders. Turbans were exchanged with Kharak Singh. One lakh of rupees was settled as *nazarana* and was paid on the spot.

In 1828 Anirodh Chand was called to Lahore by Ranjit Singh and was told to marry his sister to Hira Singh, son of his Prime Minister Raja Dhian Singh. He replied that he must consult his mother who resided at Sujanpur Tira. There it was resolved that the proposal should be rejected as Hira Singh belonged to the lower grade caste of Rajputs than the Katoch family. Fearing Ranjit Singh's retaliation he sent his mother and the sister to Hardwar and conveyed his refusal to Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh immediately marched to Sujanpur Tira at the head of an army. Anirodh Chand fled away to the British territory and was given asylum in Hindur territory. Ranjit Singh annexed all the territories of Anirodh Chand, and himself married two other step sisters of Anirodh Chand by a lady belonging to Gaddis, a wandering hill tribe of Rajputs, in 1829, at Jawalamukhi with regular Hindu ceremonies.

Anirodh Chand sought British intervention declaring that Ranjit Singh's action was against the terms of the Jawalamukhi Treaty of 1805. The request was turned down. Anirodh Chand died in 1830. His son Ranbir Chand met Lord William Bentinck at Shimla. Bentinck asked Wade to help Ranbir Chand. Ranjit Singh granted him the parganah of Mahalmarian worth Rs.50,000 a year, without the title of Raja.

Desa Singh Majithia was appointed Governor of Kangra. He was a good and considerate administrator and was popular. Land revenue was charged according to the quality of fertility of soil: 1/2, 2/5, 1/3, 1/4, of the

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gross produce. The following was the schedule of taxes: Rs. 2/- from a shepherd for 100 sheep, Re. 1/- for a buffalo, 75 paise for one handloom and for every house of artisans like tailors, barbers, etc., Rs.1.50 from every shop, 120 kg of flour from a *gharat* or water mill working on a *kuhl* or water channel and 240 kg of flour on a water mill working on an irrigation canal. On Desa Singh's death his son Lahna Singh succeeded him as governor.

Kasur

Kasur situated 68 km south of Lahore was a Pathan colony. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century its chief was Nizam-ud-din Hasan-zai Kandhari Afghan. His younger brother Qutb-ud-din worked with him. He had submitted to the Bhangi sardars on payment of a tribute. In the nineties Shah Zaman, King of Afghanistan, was trying to establish his rule in India. The two Kasuriya brothers took advantage of the situation and occupied Kankipura, Haveli, Atari, Nadian, Mahmonki, Khemkaran, Rukhanwala and Chunian belonging to Tara Singh Chamyariwala and Nakais. Nizam-ud-din submitted to the Shah. He fought a number of engagements with Ranjit Singh. During his last invasion in 1799 he requested Shah Zaman to appoint him governor of the Panjab for a tribute of five lakhs of rupees a year. The Shah did not consider the suggestion feasible on account of the sumpremacy of the Sikhs.

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On the retirement of Shah Zaman in 1799, Nizam-ud-din tried to persuade the Muslim citizens of Lahore to accept him as their chief. They rejected his proposal and invited Ranjit Singh to take possession of Lahore. In 1800 Nizam-ud-din joined Gulab Singh Bhangi in expelling Ranjit Singh from Lahore, but their plans failed. In 1801 he again adopted a rebellious attitude. Ranjit Singh sent Fatah Singh against him. The Afghan force opposed the Sikhs a few kilometres from Kasur. On being defeated they took shelter in a fort inside the town. Fatah Singh besieged the town. One gate of the fort was blown off. Nizam-ud-din sued for peace. He paid a large indemnity, accepted Ranjit Singh as his overlord, and agreed to pay tribute and to furnish troops whenever required. His two brothers-in-law, Haji Khan and Wasal Khan were left as hostages at Lahore.

In 1802 when Ranjit Singh was busy in reducing Chiniot, Nizam-ud-din collected a large force and plundered a number of camles laden with goods of some Lahore merchants. He extended his depredations upto the gates of the capital. He planned to seize Lahore. Ranjit Singh sent Fatah Singh Ahluwalia to punish him for his treachery. A little later Ranjit

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Singh joined him. In a pitched battle the Pathans were repulsed. The town was plundered. Nizam-ud-din submitted again on payment of a heavy fine. He became tributary to Ranjit Singh, and agreed to provide a quota of troops under his brother Qutb-ud-din. Ranjit Singh seized many villages of Kasur, and never returned them.

Nizam-ud-din was assassinated in 1802 by his brothers-in-law, Haji Khan, Wasal Khan and Najib Khan, whose jagirs he had resumed. Nizam-ud-din was succeeded by his brother Qutb-ud-din Khan. Nizam-ud-din's son Fatah Din Khan submitted to Ranjit Singh. He was granted a jagir by Ranjit Singh at Marup in Gugaira (Montgomery) district. He died in 1846.

Qutb-ud-din could not tolerate the rising power of Ranjit Singh. He thought that by joining Muslim rulers of Bahawalpur and Multan and with the support from Kabul it was possible to overthrow Ranjit Singh. Qutb-ud-din began to fortify Kasur. He stengthened the forts, collected arms, ammunition and provisions and recruited fresh troops. Ranjit Singh deputed Faqir Aziz-ud-din to warn Qutb-ud-din against such measures, but he continued his activities.

Ranjit Singh did not like an independent principality in the neighbourhood of his capital Lahore. Accompanied by Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, he led an expedition against Kasur in 1807. Akali Phula Singh at the head of his Nihangs was in the forefront. The battle was fought on 10 February, 1807. The Afghans were forced to take shelter in the fort. It was besieged. Occasional bombardment and skirmishes continued for a month without producing any effect on the garrison. Then Phula Singh and his Nihangs made a sudden dash into a breach made in the fort wall. Sharf-ud-din and others fled away. Qutb-ud-din was captured. Kasur was annexed in March, 1807. Qutab-ud-din was allowed to retain Mamdot territory about 400 square miles in area on the left bank of River Satluj. Qutb-ud-din agreed to pay a nominal tribute and to serve at the head of 100 horesmen whenever called upon to do so. After the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809, Qutb-ud-din tried to secure British protection, but his request was turned down as the Lahore territory extended upto the borders of Fazilka and Mamdot fell within it. Kasur district was farmed out to Nihal Singh Atariwala.

Kharals

The Kharals, a turbulent race of people, lived in about 40 villages in the districts of Shaikhupura and Jhang. They were notorious cattle lifters and thieves. The Maharaja subdued them in 1803.

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Khewra

The salt mines of Khewra were seized by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in about 1802. Khewra was a small village about 8 km away from Pind Dadan Khan, famous for its salt mines. In 1832 Alexander Burnes saw more than 100 persons, men, women and children at work in the mines and the tiny lamps burning in the recesses. The mines were not worked for two months during the rainy season. The rocks of salt were never blasted with gunpowder. Salt was excavated with sledge hammers and pick-axes. The miners received a rupee for every twenty maunds of salt brought to the surface, a task which was performed by a man, his wife and a child in two days. One thousand quintals of salt was extracted daily. The annual yield was about 320,000 quintals. Salt was sold at Rs. 5/- per quintal, exclusive of duties at the mines. The total income to the state from salt mines was about 16 lakhs with 2½ lakhs more from duties. The total expenditure on the working of the mines was about 1½ lakhs of rupees.

Kishtwar

The small state of Kishtwar in Chamba hills was annexed in May, 1821.

Kot Kamalia

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The Kharal family of Kot Kamalia was of great repute. Saadat Yar Khan, chief of the family, submitted to Ranjit Singh in 1803, and Kot Kamalia was annexed to the Lahore kingdom. Saadat Yar Khan fled to Multan. Ranjit Singh called him back and granted him 40 villages in jagir. He was succeeded by his son Muzaffar Khan. In 1810 the Maharaja gave him the village of Muhammad Shah which he retained through Sawan Mal's administration.

Kotla

Kotla situated between Nurpur and Kangra was captured by Desa Singh Majithia in 1811.

Kotlehar

Kotlehar in Kangra hills was occupied in 1825. Its Raja was granted a jagir worth Rs.10,000 a year.

Kot Maharaja

It was situated near Uch at the border of Sind. In March, 1816, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia was sent beyond Multan and Bahawalpur to realize

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tribute from Kot Maharaja. Its chief Rajab Ali Khan was sent to Lahore as a prisoner, and his estates were annexed.

Kulu

The beautiful Kulu valley is situated in the mountainous basin of River Beas. Out of its total area of 6,607 square miles only 60 square miles was arable land, the rest of it was covered with forests. It is celebrated for its picturesque scenery, salubrious climate and delicious fruits. In 1809 Maharaja Ranjit Singh was invited by Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra to expel the Gorkhas. About this time the Raja of Kulu named Ajit Singh became a feudatory of the Maharaja.

It was reported to Ranjit Singh that the Raja of Kulu was oppressing his people. The Maharaja sent Diwan Mohkam Chand in 1812. The Diwan called upon the Raja to surrender. He offered resistance. His fort was besieged. In three days' hard battle the Raja submitted. He paid a fine of two lakhs of rupees. In 1815 Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk escaped through Kulu to Ludhiana. The Maharaja fined the Raja of Kulu Rs. 80,000 for not capturing the Shah.

Mamdot

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Mamdot is situated 25 km south of Firozpur and 3 km south of the Satluj. It lay along the left bank of River Satluj over an area 60 miles long and 6 to 7 miles broad, with a total area of about 400 square miles. Mamdot belonged to Rae Kalha of Raekot. In 1800 Nizam-ud-din of Kasur conquered it. Ranjit Singh subjugated Kasur in 1807 and drove away its chief Qutb-ud-din Khan to Mamdot east of the Satluj, and allowed him to retain it as a jagir under the Lahore Durbar. Mamdot remained with Maharaja Ranjit Singh even after the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809.

Mankerah

Mankerah is situated in the southern part of Sind Sagar Doab amongst sand-hills and water was a great scarcity. It was a fortified place. In 1816 a Sikh expedition marched from Multan to Mankerah. Negotiations were in progress when its chief Muhammad Khan passed away. He was succeeded by his nephew Muin-ud-daulah. He paid a tribute of Rs. 50,000, and soon afterwards died. Ranjit Singh demanded tribute of Rs. 1,20,000 from his successor, Sher Muhammad Khan, who offered Rs. 20,000. Ranjit Singh retorted by sending Hari Singh Nalwa and Akali Phula Singh to plunder the Nawab's country. The Nawab paid some money and

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offered submission.

In 1820 Hafiz Ahmad Khan became the Nawab. He sent to Ranjit Singh a horse of great repute called Safaid Pari. He had no money and his army was dwindling away for non-payment of salaries. But he possessed a strong artillery. Ranjit Singh sent Hari Singh Nalwa against him. The Maharaja joined him at Mitha Tiwana. On 25 November, 1821, Missar Diwan Chand and Kirpa Ram were sent to Bhakkar which was occupied without any opposition. From there a detachment under Dal Singh was sent upon Derah Ismail Khan which was easily seized on 9 November, 1821. Diwan Chand and Kirpa Ram reduced Khangarh.

Another force of 8,000 men under Manik Rae surrounded the fort of Mankerah on 9 November, 1821. The Maharaja supervised the operations. *Beldars* or diggers were employed to dig wells. Meanwhile water was brought to Mankerah from a great distance on camels, ponies and bullocks. This place along with Bhakkar, Leiah and Khangarh was captured by another division of the Sikh army without any opposition. Wells having been sunk the siege was conducted with greater vigour. Troops reached the ditch around the fort under heavy fire by 7 December. The Nawab Hafiz Ahmad Khan realized that he could not hold on for long. He offered the following terms for surrender:

1. To be allowed to leave the fort with arms, personal property, and family without any molestation.
2. To be given the town of Derah Ismail Khan with a suitable jagir.

The Maharaja agreed and asked for one gate of the fort to be opened. Solemn pledges were exchanged. On 14 December, 1821, he surrendered one gate to a small Sikh force. On 18 December, the Nawab came out with 300 followers and occupied the encampment assigned to him. He was safely and honourably conducted to Derah Ismail Khan and the terms of agreement were fully observed. The conquest of Mankerah and Derah Ismail Khan established the Sikh power on the central part of River Indus.

Mankot

The petty state of Mankot was annexed in June, 1821.

Mitha Tiwana

Tiwanas of Shahpur used to commit dacoities in Lahore territory. A force was sent against them under Dal Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa in 1812. The Tiwanas fought bravely under their leader Ahmad Yar Khan, but submitted.

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Nadaun

Nadaun formed the northern portion of the Katoch dominions. After the occupation of the Kangra fort by Gorkhas in 1806, Raja Sansar Chand had settled at Nadaun situated on the banks of River Beas. Baron Charles Hugel visited Nadaun in 1835. He stated that the town had about 250 houses besides the Raja's palaces. Sansar Chand had adorned the place with temples, gardens, orchards and green lawns. He settled there learned pandits, astrologers, artists, painters, musicians, goldsmiths, sculptors, and others. This place became proverbial:

Jo jaega Nadaun,
Wapis aega kaun.
(One who goes to Nadaun never returns.)

Nadaun was conferred in jagir by the Maharaja on Raja Jodhbir Chand, son of Raja Sansar Chand by a lady belonging to Gaddis, a wandering tribe, for giving his two sisters in marriage to Ranjit Singh.

Nurpur

The original capital of Nurpur was Pathankot, and therefore the Rajput clan which ruled over Nurpur was called Pathania. Nurpur became tributary to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and after his expulsion from Panjab, the overlordship of this state passed on to Jai Singh Kanahya. In 1781 its Palahi and Kandi tracts were usurped by Amar Singh Bagga and Tara Singh of the Kanahya Misl. George Forster was at Nurpur in April, 1783. He found it fairly extensive in area fetching a revenue of four lakhs annually. There existed greater peace and prosperity than at Jammu about that time. Many merchants were migrating to Nurpur from Jammu. He wrote:

> It enjoys a state of more internal quiet, is less molested by the Sicques, and governed more equitably than any of the adjacent territories.

In 1786 it was taken over by Sansar Chand Katoch.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nurpur was held by Bir Singh Rajput (1789-1846). On 9 February, 1813, a tribute of Rs. 50,000 was demanded from him by Ranjit Singh. The Raja made excuses. He was ordered to surrender the fort. The money was paid and the estate was saved. As usual the Maharaja used to go on tours after Dasahra. Bir Singh was summoned to attend his court at Sialkot. Bir Singh failed to

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comply. On his returning to Lahore in December, Bir Singh was called to be present there. A heavy fine was imposed on him on 28 December, 1815. He submitted that the amount was beyond his means. He offered his Thakurs or family gods and goddesses of silver and gold. This proved insufficient. On 27 January, 1816, he was sent off in a *palki* to Nurpur to see with his own eyes confiscation of all his estates and property. On 7 February, 1816, his fort was closely besieged. On 10 February, 1816, his fort of Nurpur yielded one lakh maunds of grain, 50,000 maunds of gunpowder and ammunition, 200 swivels, 10 cannon, 2 elephants, 200 horses, and many other precious articles, besides the great loot by the soldiers. Bir Singh was brought as a prisoner to Lahore. In July, 1816, he managed to escape across River Satluj into British territory. He sought British protection. Ross was instructed not to encourage him in any manner whatsoever. He was not allowed to visit Ludhiana for fear of Ranjit Singh's displeasure.

On Ranjit Singh's representation against Bir Singh to the Agent at Ludhiana, the Maharaja was informed that Bir Singh was given asylum on the condition that he would not try to recover his lost possessions in any way, and the British authorities would see that he led a peaceful life. In October, 1826, he crossed River Satluj to go to Nurpur. He was captured by Desa Singh Majithia, the Sikh governor of Kangra hills and was sent to Lahore. He was offered a jagir worth Rs. 12,000 a year, but he declined. He died in 1846.

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Pind Dadan Khan

Pind Dadan Khan was situated on the right bank of River Jehlam, 8 km distant from the Salt Range which stretched from River Jehlam to the Indus. It consisted of three small towns lying close to one another, Kot Sultan, Kot Sahib Khan and Pind Dadan Khan, with a total population of about 6,000. The houses in the town were built of deodar wood which had floated down River Jehlam. Alexander Burnes saw one such tree lying on the bank of River Jehlam measuring over four metres in girth.

In December, 1797, Ranjit Singh invaded Pind Dadan Khan. The Muslim chief of the place expecting the arrival of Shah Zaman offered firm resistance. He was ultimately defeated, but was retained in his position for an annual tribute.

Pindigheb

Pindigheb contained the parganahs of Jundla, Khunda, Makhad and Sil. The people belonged to the hardiest races of the district, and their

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subjugation took rather a long time. In the same way in Fatahjang and Attock the tribes were overpowered after a prolonged struggle. In fact, in these parts the Sikh rule "was never so fully developed".

Punchh

Ruhullah Khan was the Raja of Punchh. In 1814 during Ranjit Singh's Kashmir expedition he had played a treacherous part in thwarting the attempt of the Maharaja to conquer Kashmir. In 1819 Missar Diwan Chand occupied Punchh. Ruhullah Khan was granted a jagir worth Rs. 2,000 a year. Sher Jang Khan, a member of the ruling family, was installed as the Raja of Punchh on the recommendation of Jamadar Khushhal Singh. In 1838 Sher Jang Khan fell in love with a Hindu woman of Chaprar, belonging to the retainers of Raja Dhian Singh and eloped with her. Raja Dhian Singh's men pursued him and in a skirmish Sher Jang Khan was killed. The murderer of the chief was also shot dead by Sher Jang Khan's men. The Maharaja granted Punchh in jagir to Raja Hira Singh.

Rajauri

Rajauri stands on a lovely site at a height of 3,000 feet, 126 km from Jammu, 74 km from Punchh and 140 km from Gujrat on the old imperial route leading to Srinagar by the Pir Panjal Pass. The town and bazaar were well built on the right bank of River Tawi. The supplies of food-stuff, grass, firewood and water were plentiful. Diwan Mohkam Chand captured the fort of Rajauri in 1812, and confirmed Aghar Khan in the Raja's office. In the Kashmir expedition of 1814, Aghar Khan, the Raja of Rajauri, had misled Ranjit Singh. Bhayya Ram Singh, a resident of U.P., a deserter from the British army, was in the service of the Lahore Durbar. Through the treachery of Aghar Khan and cowardice of Ram Singh the expedition had failed. Ram Singh was sent to subdue Rajauri. Ata Muhammad Khan, ruler of Kashmir, and Raja Ruhullah Khan of Punchh sent men and munitions to Aghar Khan. In the battle Ruhullah Khan's son was killed and victory remained undecided. The Maharaja deputed Ram Dayal. Aghar Khan sought for peace. Ram Dayal rejected the peace proposal, plundered the town and razed the fort to the ground. Aghar Khan paid some tribute and agreed by a treaty to help the next expedition to conquer Kashmir. He was retained in his position. In 1819 during the last Kashmir expedition Aghar Khan took to flight. His younger brother Rahmatullah Khan was installed as Raja of Rajauri. Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu took him prisoner and occupied Rajauri in May, 1820.

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Ramnagar

Ramnagar is situated on the left bank of River Chenab in a spacious plain 45 km north-west of Gujranwala. Its original name was Rasulnagar and it was the stronghold of Chatha Pathans. It was captured by Ranjit Singh in 1795. He granted them two villages. He built a fort and a *baradari* and laid a fine garden on the banks of the river and used it as a holiday home.

Sahiwal

In the beginning of 1810, Ranjit Singh occupied himself in reducing the Muslim chiefs in the Chaj Doab. On 25 January, 1810, Fatah Khan, chief of Sahiwal, agreed to pay a tribute of Rs. 80,000, but failed to collect this amount. The town was invested on 7 February. Fatah Khan surrendered. He was taken prisoner, and sent to Lahore with the whole of his family. Sahiwal was annexed. In January, 1811, Fatah Khan was set free with his family and was granted a jagir.

Sind Sagar Doab

This region was divided into a large number of small independent estates, each under a chaudhri, who lived in a fort surrounded by half a dozen villages. These petty princes were always busy in fighting among themselves. The people developed themselves into a race of freebooters. This tract was celebrated for a fine breed of horses, and the inhabitants were celebrated for good horsemanship and skill in the use of spear. Maharaja Ranjit Singh reduced it in 1821.

Tank and Derah Din Panah

Tank is situated in Bannu district 67 km north-west of Derah Ismail Khan. It had a fort 13 metres high on an area of 250 square metres. It belonged to Allahadad Khan, head of the Khattekhail tribe. Ranjit Singh conquered it in 1821 and retained Allahadad Khan as a tributary of the Sikh state. As tribute had fallen into arrears, an expedition was sent against him in 1836. Allahadad Khan fled away and became an inveterate enemy of the Sikhs, and stopped all revenues by his predatory excursions.

Tiwanas

Khuda Yar Khan, the Tiwana chief, submitted to Ranjit Singh, and served under him at the head of 50 Tiwana horsemen, the picturesque men in their lofty turbans, one end of which high up on top flew with the wind.

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Uch

Uch is situated at the confluence of the five rivers of the Panjab. It was the seat of the holy Sayyid Pirs, held for sanctity by both Hindus and Muslims. Ranjit Singh reached Uch on 15 February, 1810. The holy men waited on the Maharaja with horses, and offered their blessings. They were left in possession of their estates on the promise of paying an annual tribute. In April, 1816, Uch was annexed, and the Sayyids were given a jagir for maintenance.

Waziristan

Waziristan means the land of Waziri Pathans. Their country lies between the Sulaiman mountains on the west, Kalabagh on the Indus in the east, by Safaid Koh on the north and 150 km south upto Derah Ismail Khan. It is covered by hills. Ranjit Singh made no attempt to conquer Waziristan.

Comment

Mountstuart Elphinstone, while returning from his diplomatic mission to Kabul and passing right across Panjab wrote in 1809:

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> Almost the whole of the Punjab belongs to Ranjit Singh, who in 1805 was but one of many chiefs, but who when we passed had acquired the sovereignty of all the Sikhs in the Punjab.

Ranjit Singh's strong arm had crushed numerous divisive forces which had prevailed in Punjab for the past one hundred years. He moulded them into a unified whole under his standard of monarchy.

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CHAPTER 5

The Cis-Satluj Territory Under Lahore

Ranjit Singh invaded Cis-Satluj thrice,
Seized along Satluj a territorial slice;
Without key places of Ludhiana and Firozpur,
Pointing at Lahore as a dagger and rapier.

Ranjit Singh's Cis-Satluj Conquests

In the Cis-Satluj campaigns Ranjit Singh plundered one chief to bribe another. He did so not with regard to money, jewellery, horses, elephants, or other valuables. He distributed territory to some chiefs gratis and to others for a certain amount of annual tribute in order to establish his supremacy over them. He also granted a number of villages to his most devoted general Diwan Mohkam Chand and to other loyal officials. Some territory was assigned to his ambitious mother-in-law, Rani Sada Kaur. The last three kinds of grants belonged to Lahore durbar. According to H.M. Lawrence the possessions of Ranjit Singh on the left bank of the Satluj were of annual value of more than twelve lakhs of rupees in 1809. In 1842 their worth was estimated at Rs. 17 lakhs.

In the Treaty of Amritsar there was no mention of Ranjit Singh's territories south of the Satluj. Ranjit Singh possessed some 45 taluqas wholly or in share with others on the British side of the River Satluj. In these districts Ranjit Singh appointed his agents. They maintained a certain number of troops necessary for internal administration on the proceeds from their lands. The agents were paid salary in cash. For example, Waisakha Singh incharge of Zira got Rs. 1,000 per mensem.

The First Expedition, 1806

In his first expedition, Ranjit Singh remained in Cis-Satluj region for

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3½ months from 26 July to 10 November, 1806. He was accompanied by 20,000 troops under Diwan Mohkam Chand. Raja Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala and Gurdit Singh of Ladwa in Karnal district were in attendance upon him. Several other chiefs joined his camp on his crossing River Satluj. Ranjit Singh's first victims were the two widows, Nur-ul-Nisa and Lachhmi, of Rae Ilyas Khan of Raekot, a descendant of Kalha family. Their estate consisting of 318 villages was seized and they were given two villages for maintenance. The distribution was made as follows:

1. Talwandi and106 villages worth Rs. 40,505 to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia.
2. Ghilla and 71 villages, revenue Rs. 33,945 to Diwan Mohkam Chand.
3. Kot Basia and 31 villages worth Rs. 26,690 to Jaswant Singh of Nabha.
4. Badowal and 32 villages fetching Rs. 23,540 to Gurdit Singh of Ladwa.
5. Ludhiana and Jagraon with 54 villages of the annual value of Rs.23,260 to his maternal uncle Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. He was Ranjit Singh's great adviser, but in his heart he was his enemy on account of the murder of his sister, and of his supremacy.
6. 10 villages in Kot and Jagraon valued at Rs.5,714 to Basawa Singh.
7. One village in Talwandi worth Rs.400 to Bhanga Singh of Thanesar.

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The Second Expedition, 1807

Ranjit Singh's second expedition lasted only for a month from 27 August to 26 September, 1807. During this expedition the territorial distribution was made as follows:

The Ghungrana estate owned by Gujar Singh, son of Tara Singh Ghaiba of Rahon, Jitmal Singh of Raepur Rani and Kabul Khan Pathan of Malerkotla, was seized.

1. Five villages worth Rs. 3,550 per annum were given to Gurdit Singh of Ladwa.
2. Seven villages yielding Rs. 3,350, annually were granted to Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha.
3. Naraingarh "with its surrounding villages", having a revenue Rs. 12,580 per annum was given to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia.
4. Fatah Singh also received three villages from Jitmal Singh of Raepur Rani having an income of Rs. 1,200 every year.
5. Three more villages of the same chief in Ghungrana parganah assessed at Rs. 2,255 a year were given to Raja Bhag Singh of Jind.

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6. Bhag Singh got Morindah seized from the sons of Dharam Singh, containing 27 villages offering him an income of Rs. 17,000 every year.

7. Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha got only one village in Ghungrana parganah.

8. The remaining 36 villages of Ghungrana worth Rs. 23,415 were assigned to Karam Singh of Nagla.

9. The estate of Zira near Firozpur belonging to the widow of Mohar Singh Nishanwala of Ambala was seized. Of this 12 villages with a revenue of Rs. 7,500 per annum were given to Diwan Mohkam Chand.

10. The Diwan received Kot Kapura with 77 villages taxed annually at Rs. 61,400.

11. Diwan Mohkam Chand also obtained 12 villages in Dharamkot region belonging to his ally Tara Singh Ghaiba, who expired while returning home from Naraingarh campaign.

12. The other territory of Tara Singh Ghaiba, south of the Satluj, consisting of 62 villages worth Rs. 22,634 a year in revenue was given to Gharba Singh.

13. The parganah of Wadni including Moga was assigned to his mother-in-law Rani Sada Kaur. She was Ranjit Singh's second adviser, but in her heart she was his opponent owing to the ill-treatment of her daughter Mahtab Kaur. Ranjit Singh did not publicly acknowledge his two sons by her as legitimate.

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Ranjit Singh's Third Expedition, October, 1808

All the territories seized by Ranjit Singh during his third expedition after the arrival of Charles Metcalfe on his mission at Kasur were restored to their owners under the Treaty of Amritsar, 1809.

Diwan Mohkam Chand's Conquests, July, 1808

Ranjit Singh was keen to unite all the Sikh states in the Cis-Satluj region with his kingdom. A fierce opposition to this scheme came from the Sikh chiefs who sought British protection. A mission headed by Charles Metcalfe was to arrive at Lahore for negotiations with Ranjit Singh in the beginning of August, 1808. Diwan Mohkam Chand obtained Ranjit Singh's approval to seize territories along the southern bank of River Satluj. In torrential rains in July, 1808, he reduced Anandpur, Makhowal, Rupar, Sialba, Chamkaur, Machhiwara, Tihara and Kot Isa Khan. Thus Ranjit Singh's territory south of River Satluj extended from Anandpur to Mamdot. The land along the banks of River Satluj from Rupar to Mamdot was very fertile. It yielded grain in immense quantities.

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It was stored by people in large pits about 3 metres deep plastered with mud, called *khati* for emergency. Corn could be kept in them quite wholesome and fit for food for twenty years.

The Ludhiana Office on Lahore Territory South of the Satluj

The Ludhiana office was sore that in spite of River Satluj being the boundary of Ranjit Singh's kingdom, he still possessed certain territories south of it. In 1811 it was resolved that those territories for which no tribute had been paid to Lahore by the chiefs were under British protection.

As regards Mamdot, Murray, Agent at Ambala, expressed the view that as it was situated south of the Satluj, the Pathan chief should be taken under British protection. The Delhi Reisdent upheld Ranjit Singh's claim.

David Ochterlony's Note, dated 29 July, 1809

1. A large part of the territory along river Satluj from Chamkaur to Harikepatan and Kot Kapura worth about 4 lakh of rupees annually was kept directly under Lahore Government.

2. His Commander-in-Chief Diwan Mohkam Chand was granted 102 villages in the taluqas of Dharamkot, Zira and Kot Kapura of the value of Rs. 68,900 annually. This territory also belonged to Ranjit Singh.

3. Ranjit Singh's maternal uncle, Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, was given 90 villages in the parganahs of Ludhiana-Sirhind fetching annual revenues of Rs. 41,700.

4. Ranjit Singh's turbaned-brother, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala, received 106 villages in the taluqas of Talwandi and Naraingarh worth Rs. 40,505 a year.

5. Jodh Singh of Bassia[1] was assigned a number of villages to the annual value of Rs. 42,000.

6. Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha secured 38 villages bringing annual revenue of Rs. 30,040.

7. Gurdit Singh of Ladwa got 32 villages in the taluqa of Baddowal yielding Rs. 23,540.

8. Karam Singh Nagla obtained 36 villages in the taluqa of Ghungrana worth Rs. 23,415.

9. Garbha Singh of Bharatgarh was granted 62 villages in the taluqa of Dharamkot fetching an annual revenue of Rs. 22,634.

[1]Bassia means Dera Basi situated between Chandigarh and Ambala. It was given to Jodh Singh Kalsia of Chhachhrauli.

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10. Jodh Singh Kalsia of Chhachhrauli was given villages worth Rs. 10,000 a year.

11. Basant Singh received villages to the annual value of Rs. 6,914.

12. Atar Singh was assigned villages worth Rs. 4,000.

13. Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, was granted Himmatpur Wadni near Moga with the stipulation that she would pay Rs. 15,000 per year.

14. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala and Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal got nothing.

These grants were made on the specific condition that the recipients accepted subordination to Ranjit Singh as their overlord.

Captain W. Murray's List, dated 17 March, 1828

Ranjit Singh claimed 45 taluqas in the Cis-Satluj region. The British Government's Ludhiana office asked Captain Murray, an Assistant, to prepare a list of places south of the Satluj belonging to the Maharaja. The list prepared by Murray was forwarded by Colebrooke to Captain Wade on 17 March, 1828.

1. Achal Singh, Chait Singh, Ram Singh, Tirlok Singh Sodhis–Anandpur, Makhowal.

2. Atar Singh Sodhi, Chiman Singh, Daya Singh and Sardar Singh–Mattewala.

3. Desa Singh – Bajra, Goewal, Howab, Karesh, Sujatwala, Sohera.

4. Deva Singh Dowabia–Sailbah.

5. Dharam Singh–Khai, Muedkoh, Wazidpur.

6. Dharam Singh Atariwala–Kunki.

7. Dolah Singh Malwai–Saholi.

8. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia–Basi, Bharog, Jagraon, Kot Isa Khan, Mahani, Khaspura, Molanwala, Naraingarh, Sadar Khan, Tohra.

9. Fatah Singh Sirhaliwala–Mari.

10. Faujdar Singh Sodhi – Machhiwara.

11. Gobind Jas Lala, Maharaja's agent at Delhi – Kotari, Puwa, Want.

12. Gujar Singh Kakkar, a part of Kotlah.

13. Gulab Singh Sodhi–Kot Guru Har Sahae.

14. Hakim Rae–Dharamkot.

15. Hari Singh and Karora Singh–Rajwana given in alms.

16. Hari Singh Kang–Fatahgarh.

17. Himmat Singh Johlewala–Kalal Majri given by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia.

18. Jawahar Singh Sodhi – Chuhar Chak, Dhilwan, Talwandi Sayyidan.

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19. Jiwan Singh–Jhandianah.
20. Joga Singh Sodhi–Buthor.
21. Khazan Singh–Ranian.
22. Khushhal Singh, Jamadar–Bahlolpur, Bharatgarh, Chamelgarh, Lobangarh.
23. Koer Singh Kakkar's sons, Pir Baksh Jamadar and Rupa *Mai*–a dependency of Phillaur district, situated on the left bank of the Satluj.
24. Lachhman Kaur, Sardarni–Firozpur.
25. Man Singh Kakkar–Nurpur.
26. Mogh Singh Kakkar and Jamadar Pir Bakhsh–Khaira, Sohala, Todarpur.
27. Mohar Singh–Tughal.
28. Pir Bakhsh Jamadar–a part of Kotlah.
29. Polah Singh and Tikka Singh–Ghungrana.
30. Qutab-ud-din Khan–Rumanwala, Mamdot.
31. Ram Dayal, Lala, Maharaja's agent stationed at Ludhiana–Sanehwal.
32. Ramji Das, Diwan–Rasulpur.
33. Ram Singh–Aitiana.
34. Sada Kaur, *Mai*, mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and grandmother of Kanwar Sher Singh–Himmatpur, Pattoki, Wadni, Moga.
35. Sadda Singh–Mohlan.
36. Sarbuland Khan–Zira.
37. Sher Singh, Kanwar, Maharaja's second son–Behekbodla, Bhagta, Hitawat, Jinwar, Kot Kapura, Muktsar.
38. Sikhs of Bhendhiachin–Kenoan, Singhanwala, Suhewaron.
39. Uttam Singh, Sodhi–Chamkaur.
40. Yusaf Khan–Molwal.

The Satluj River

The Satluj is one of the great rivers of the Indus system. It rises in mount Kailash and enters the Mansarovar lake. In the mountains it appears as a narrow and deep channel, and is unfordable. At Bilaspur it could be crossed on inflated skins. It enters the plains at Rupar and becomes navigable. The boats plying in this river were of different designs. They were flat, shallow, square at the end with a high prow, to cut the water rapidly.

Between Rupar and Harikepatan there were numerous ferries. The most notable of them were at Talwandi, Phillaur and Tihara. The following were the ferries between Harikepatan and Firozpur:

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1. Harike, 2. Bhao, 3. Asyake, 4. Palli, 5. Nagarke, 6. Bara, 7. Bareke.

Below Firozpur there were fords near the village of Nalcha, 15 km from Firozpur below Mamdot.

Important Places Belonging To Lahore Durbar

Anandpur

Anandpur stands at the foot of Naina Devi hill in Bilaspur state in the bend of the River Satluj, 11 km from each side. Its original name was Makhowal. The new name was given to it by Guru Tegh Bahadur. It is the birthplace of the Khalsa. Anandpur is one of the most sacred places of the Sikhs. It was the scene of Guru Gobind Singh's several battles against the fanaticism of the Mughals and prejudice of the neighbouring hill rajas.

Rupar

Rupar is said to have been founded about fifteen hundred years ago by Rai Rupeshar and was known as Ruppur. It is situated at the point where river Satluj issues out of the hills into the plains. It was an important mart for exchange of goods between the hills and the plains. The Khewra salt and iron goods such as locks made at Rupar and cotton twill (*susi*) were exchanged for hill products such as ginger, turmeric, potatoes, opium and charas.

The Rupar estate included Sialba, Kurali and Khizarabad. Rupar proper fetched Rs. 80,000 annually, and other places two lakhs of rupees.

Monograph 17 dated 2 August, 1815, states that Sardar Deva Singh of Rupar and Sialbah requested Ranjit Singh to remit Rs. 700/- of the revenue tax imposed upon him regarding Mini. The Maharaja replied that such revenue tax could not be remitted. Another note in it dated 13 January, 1816, says that Deva Singh presented to the Maharaja a tray of *misri kuzas* (cups of crystallized sugar). Sometime later on account of their strategic importance they were taken under British protection without making a reference to Ranjit Singh.

Himmatpur-Wadni

In September, 1808, Ranjit Singh had assigned Himmatpur-Wadni to Sada Kaur in jagir for an annual payment of Rs. 15,000. Later on in 1820 he forced her to sign a document surrendering back Himmatpur-Wadni to him. He then tried to seize it forcibly. Sada Kanwar complained to the

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British authorities. Ranjit Singh's appeals to the higher authorities succeeded and Himmatpur-Wadni reverted back to him in 1825. This made no difference to Sada Kanwar as she had been rotting in jail since 1821.

Wadni

During the first Anglo-Sikh War in 1845, all the Cis-Satluj possessions of Ranjit Singh were confiscated. In the autumn of 1846, George Campbell took charge of the new territory south of the Satluj, between Ludhiana and Firozpur, and running back to the boundaries of Patiala and Nabha. This was called District Himmatpur-Wadni situated near Moga.

Harikepatan

It was the chief mercantile passage. There were about 30 boats. Ranjit Singh maintained a cavalry regiment there to check Akalis from crossing into British territory.

Observations of Alexander Burnes and Mohan Lal

In January, 1832, Alexander Burnes and Mohan Lal travelled from Ludhiana to Harikepatan through the territory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh along the left bank of River Satluj. Burns wrote:

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> On the banks of the river we passed innumerable villages, the houses of which were terrace roofed, and formed of sun-dried bricks on a wooden framework. They had a clean and comfortable look, and the peasantry appeared well clad and happy. They consist of Jats, both Hindoo and Mohammedan and a few Sikhs.

Madan Lal observed that along the southern bank of river Satluj there were many Muslim farmers . . . "they are not civilly treated by Sikhs or Khalsa, who consider plunder as traffic, and oppression justice."

Firozpur

Firozpur is situated on an elevated ground in a vast plain, 5 km east of River Satluj. It lies 70 km south of Lahore and 23 km south of Kasur. In 1792 it fell to the share of Dhanna Singh Bhangi who was married to Lachhman Kaur, daughter of the celebrated Bhangi sardar Rae Singh of Buriya and Jagadhri. It was a walled town with several gates. There was a dry branch of River Satluj. It had a fine tank and an elegant pagoda

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situated in the midst of a grove of trees.

The small principality of Firozpur was governed by Sardarni Lachhman Kaur of the Bhangi Misl.

Murray, the political Agent at Ludhiana, toured in the Cis-Satluj region in 1823. He was deeply impressed with the strategic position of Firozpur. He recorded that Firozpur was of greater importance than Ludhiana. Ludhiana was 190 km from Lahore, and Firozpur only 70 km. From Ludhiana two rivers were to be crossed and from Firozpur only one river. From Ludhiana via Jalandhar and Amritsar the country was predominantly inhabited by Hindus and Sikhs. The country from Firozpur via Kasur and Raewind had mainly Muslim population who were favourable to the English. Murray called Firozpur "the key to India".

The widow Lachhman Kaur in 1824 proposed to the British to exchange Firozpur for some territory on the Yamuna. The Governor-General realized the political and military importance of Firozpur, but he remarked that its occupation would alarm Ranjit Singh. He wrote that Ranjit Singh should not be allowed to seize it under any circumstances, and they should wait till the death of Lachhman Kaur who had no children.

Meeting with Lachhman Kaur, 1831

Colonel Bellasis visited Lachhman Kaur in November, 1831. He noted that her territory occupied an area of about 100 square miles, but not even one tenth of that land was in her undisputed possession. In fact, the town and its neighbourhood about one km around it was her actual kingdom. The cultivators lived in the town. The fort situated inside Bansi Gate was an irregular but picturesque building, about 100 metres long and 40 metres broad. It was surrounded by a dry ditch 10 feet deep and 10 feet wide. Its neighbourhood was "crammed to the throat with dogs, filth and old women". The Rani was then excavating a tank in memory of herself and her husband as they had no children.

Bellasis waited upon the Rani. She freely talked to him by covering her head and face with a thick sheet of cloth (*ohla*). She told him that she cherished cordial relations with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but "her territory rejoiced in the British protection". Her subjects were quarrelsome and rebellious. They were all Muslims. They had little respect for the rule of a woman, particularly a Sikh lady. They would fight rather than pay their revenue. They had given a lot of trouble to her husband. Once she had gone to her parents at Buriya on the Yamuna, in her absence they admitted her enemy into the fort. She was going to lose her estate, but

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she recovered it with the help of the British. "They have ever been a rebellious race", continued the old lady, "and are not the subjects for a woman's rule; would that I had half the lands in my own country, on the pleasant and peaceful banks of the Jamna". Bellasis says he did not hear any complaint anywhere either in the town or on the road against Lachhman Kaur. She was highly respected by one and all.

The Rani lived in a couple of little rooms, each about 15 feet by nine and of about the same height. There was a neat little *baradari*, a square, with three doors on each side, in a newly laid out garden close to the tank. Bellasis climbed up the roof of Lachhman Kaur's house to have a view of the surrounding country. He witnessed desolation, an endless bare plain, with a few trees here and there, and still fewer wretched hamlets at great intervals. The most striking sight was that of watch towers which indicated insecurity all around. In the southwesterly direction towers of Mamdot were visible in the distance. The kot of Dulchi, a large Dogar village, was visible 3 km away. Though they were the subjects of the Rani, yet they were always in rebellion against her authority. There was an air of poverty and dirt on all sides. Cultivation was little. There was no flourishing shop in the town.

In the evening Bellasis visited Bareke or Gandasinghwala 5 km from the town. On the way he saw numerous cows, oxen, sheep and goats. The village Bareke was a big Dogar settlement. It consisted of three hamlets– known as Chaineke, Saiteke and Bareke Khas. They were situated half a mile from one another. The three villages owned land in common. Half the land was in *khadar* and half in the high ground. It had eight wells. A few acres of land around each well was under cultivation. Ploughing was poorly done. Produce was below normal. The total population of these three villages was about 500. They were all *machhis* (fishermen) and *mallah* (boatmen). The Dogar zamindars lorded over them. They were idlers and wasted their time in gossip, smoking and sleeping under half a dozen barkain trees in the day. At night they prowled to steal cattle or commit theft or plunder on an unwary traveller.

The Dogars were armed with sword and shield. In their plundering raids they were accompanied by sweepers or *chuhras*. They professed the religion of their masters who treated them like slaves. The Dogars stole only cattle, coins and ornaments. The sweepers stole grain and eatables. They carried a short spear or an iron-headed heavy strong *lathi*.

Some of them were so strong and sturdy that in one theft a man, finding no sack or a large cloth, carried on his back an earthen receptable containing two quintals of wheat to a distance of about 20 km.

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A New Island in the Bed of River Satluj

Bellasis saw that recently an island had appeared in the bed of River Satluj near Bareke. The *ghat* of the river was 2½ km from Bareke village. The ferry was just below the end of the newly formed island. It was 8 km long and about 1 km broad. It was covered with high grass and bushes. It was frequented by tigers who lived on hog-deer and on the cattle driven there to graze from both sides. The ferry at the beginning of November was 300 yards wide. The passage took only half an hour. In rainy season it covered nearly 4 km and on account of strong current about six hours were taken to cross it. About ten boats were kept there. Bareke village and the ferry both belonged to Firozpur. The Nawab of Mamdot seized the village. Transit duties on the eastern side went to the Khai chief and on the western side to Kasur chief. The levy varied from 30 paise to Rs. 5, according to the nature of the commodity passing across the river. Grain paid less, groceries, pashmina and cloth more. The dry sandy bed extending over two miles was on Firozpur side.

Firozpur Occupied by the British, 1835

Sardarni Lachhman Kaur died on 3 or 4 October, 1835, without an heir. Captain Wade, British Political Agent at Ludhiana, quietly and without informing Ranjit Singh, at once occupied it. He wrote that it would serve as a good check post for observation on Ranjit Singh's movements with regard to Sind. A more effective control could be had on Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs concerning any collaboration or relationship with Lahore. It had also great commercial importance, being the only passage to Harikepatan. Wade called himself Ranjit Singh's son, and so he expected no opposition from his foster father.

Ranjit Singh's claim on Firozpur was based on the following grounds:

1. Firozpur estate belonged to Gujar Singh Bhangi. All his possessions were acquired by Ranjit Singh.

2. In July, 1808, Diwan Mohkam Chand seized the Cis-Satluj belt from Anandpur to Mamdot all along the southern bank of River Satluj. Lachhman Kaur admitted herself as a vassal of the Maharaja and so she was not expelled in view of her being a just ruler without an issue and a widow.

3. In a dispute between Sardarni Lachhman Kaur and Anand Singh, vakil of Ranjit Singh, posted at Kot Kapura, the latter appealed to Birch, Assistant at Ludhiana. He was told to refer the dispute to Ranjit Singh who was the proper authority to decide the issue.

4. When Lachhman Kaur had asked for help from Captain Ross

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against Dharam Singh and Khushhal Singh, she was informed to refer the case to the Maharaja.

5. George Campbell, who was serving in the Cis-Satluj region as a Deputy Commissioner of Wadni, wrote in his *Memoirs* about Firozpur:

> It was very doubtful whether we were entitled to it, or whether it was a Lahore fief; in fact, in the early lists it appears as a dependency of Runjeet Singh. But we were then very keen about the navigation of the Sutlej and Indus, and Runjeet, willing to oblige, yielded the point. The place was very handy to us, when we were in alliance with him, for the Afghan War, and was made a great depot for our troops. Afterwards the Sikhs much complained that when the war was over we made it a strong permanent cantonment and, as they thought, a sort of menace to Lahore. Indeed, when we came to be on bad terms with them, many people thought that so advanced a post was not strategically profitable.

6. Ranjit Singh's mistake was that he did not maintain close contact with Lachhman Kaur.

In 1838 the British established a cantonment there. The country people were given to stealing and fighting. Disputes over boundary were innumerable. Wade and Murray calculated that about 500 men were killed every year in the raids and boundary disputes. This was the state of things, says the report, "in the latter days of Sirdarnee Luchumu Kour". "When no man dug his well without erecting his tower of defence beside it, and no traveller or trader thought of moving with less than a score of men to protect him".

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Henry Lawrence, the First Deputy Commissioner

Henry Lawrence was appointed Deputy Commissioner in charge of Firozpur district in January, 1839, and he stayed there for three years. During this short period he built the new town, and strengthened the defenceless fort to protect it from frequent raids of the lawless Dogars. He invited traders and shopkeepers from neighbouring towns to settle there, and built the main bazar of the cantonment to facilitate the settling of newcomers. He settled the boundary between Firozpur and Faridkot State.

As a result of Henry's three years' continuous endeavour, the Government engineers reported:

"The town, when completed, will be as airy, convenient, and well built

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as any in Hindustan", and, "when the fort is finished and armed, it will be capable of resisting a considerable force with field artillery".

Mamdot

Mamdot lay 20 km from Bareke. Its chief Jamal-ud-din Khan was a reluctant vassal of Ranjit Singh. His total income from fines, crops, transit duties and court was Rs. 50,000. His country along River Satluj was nearly 100 km long. It was irrigated from the river.

Comment

With regard to Ranjit Singh's Cis-Satluj territories, the British Government arranged that they did not form a continuous tract, and kept them disconnected as separate entities. Further he was not allowed to consolidate his authority there. These places were allowed to keep the smallest number of troops to maintain internal order, otherwise they remained under British supremacy. Murray was the political agent at Ludhiana till 1823. He followed a tough line in dealing with the Lahore Durbar. In 1823 Captain Wade succeeded him. His policy was to uphold the Lahore claim over minor and unimportant places. Thereby he managed to win the goodwill of Ranjit Singh. In fact Ludhiana and Firozpur formed daggers aimed at the heart of Lahore.

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CHAPTER 6

Attock

Attock was under Jahandad Khan,
His enemy was Wazir Fatah Khan;
He expelled Jahandad's brother from Kashmir,
Jahandad gave Attock to Ranjit through Aziz-ud-din Faqir.

The Durrani Possessions in India

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Ahmad Shah Durrani possessed eight territories in India in its north-western parts. They consisted of the provinces of Peshawar, Attock, Kashmir, Lahore, Sirhind, Multan, Sind and the State of Bahawalpur. Of these the Sikh sardars captured Lahore and Sirhind. Multan remained in Sikh occupation from 1771 to 1779. Then it was recovered by his son Taimur Shah. The other places were governed by Afghan nobles appointed from Kandhar and Kabul.

Ahmad Shah died in 1772. His son Taimur Shah could not recover Lahore and Sirhind, but kept the remaining Durrani kingdom intact till his death in 1793. Then his several sons by different wives began to quarrel among themselves, and the Durrani kingdom became a prey to confusion, chaos and anarchy. The weakness of Shah Zaman, 1793-1800, languishing rule of Shah Mahmud, 1800, and indolence of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, 1803, led to its decline and decay. Shah Mahmud regained the throne in 1809, and entrusted full control of his government to his Prime Minister Wazir Fatah Khan Barakzai.

Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk fled to India. Jahandad Khan, Governor of Attock, captured him, and sent him to his brother Ata Muhammad Khan, Governor of Kashmir. Both these governors were real brothers, sons of late Wazir Sher Muhammad Khan and grandsons of Shah Vali Khan.

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Bamzai, the famous Wazir of Ahmad Shah Durrani. The two brothers did not submit to Barakzai Wazir Fatah Khan and paid no tribute to Shah Mahmud. Kashmir was the richest province of the Durrani kingdom. Wazir Fatah Khan was determined to seize the accumulated hoard of Ata Muhammad Khan and to entrust the province to his real brother Azim Khan. With the collaboration of Ranjit Singh Wazir Fatah Khan succeeded in his object and expelled Ata Muhammad Khan from Kashmir.

Attock Annexed by Ranjit Singh, 1813

When the joint expedition to Kashmir was planned in December, 1812, Jahandad Khan, governor of Attock, became restless. He felt sure that after the defeat of his brother, he would be the next target of the Wazir. Ata Muhammad Khan advised his brother to negotiate a deal with Ranjit Singh for the surrender of Attock to him. When Ranjit Singh was still at Rohtas, negotiating with Wazir Fatah Khan, Jahandad Khan sent his confidential messengers to the Maharaja. He demanded security against Kabul, a jagir in Panjab and a handsome allowance. The Maharaja warmly received the agents, approved of the proposal, and asked Jahandad Khan to meet him at Wazirabad. The terms were amicably settled and the bargain was confirmed. Both parties appointed their spies to report the result of Wazir's Kashmir campaign at the earliest.

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While leaving Rohtas, Ranjit Singh appointed Daya Singh commander with a strong contingent at Serai Kali, 11 km from Hasan Abdal towards Rawalpindi, to occupy the fort of Attock when offered. Another force under Bhayya Ram Singh Purabia was posted at Hasan Abdal, 53 km from Attock, to reinforce Daya Singh in an emergency. Devi Das, Mit Singh Bharania and Faqir Aziz-ud-din were sent from Lahore to stay at Hasan Abdal to complete the negotiations.

Kashmir fell to the Wazir in the middle of February, 1813, and the news reached Lahore and Attock simultaneously about 20 February, 1813. Jahandad Khan contacted Daya Singh to take possession of the fort of Attock. The diplomatic party headed by Aziz-ud-din asked Daya Singh to wait till the safe return of Diwan Mohkam Chand who was with the Wazir at the head of a strong Sikh force out of the Pir Panjal mountains into the hills under Lahore Durbar. The Diwan was hurriedly returning in view of the Attock affair. In consequence, the three parties reached Attock on 9 March. Abdur Rahim, the garrison master, in the fort relinquished it to Maharaja's officers, and helped them in firmly

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establishing their hold on it. Jahandad Khan had gone to Lahore. The fort of Attock with 134 villages became a part of Ranjit Singh's kingdom.

The following articles fell into the hands of the Sikhs in the fort of Attock:

3,510 maunds or 1,400 quintals of grain,
430 maunds or 170 quintals of ammunition,
235 maunds or 93 quintals of tobacco and rock salt,
70 pieces of guns, mortars and swivels.

Ranjit Singh refused to accept congratulations and *nazars* from his courtiers. He expected an attack on the fort by Wazir Fatah Khan while going back from Kashmir to Kabul.

When the fort of Attock passed into the possession of Ranjit Singh, Qazi Ghulam Muhammad, who was at Attock to decide religious cases, crossed River Indus and took refuge in the Khatak country under Firoz Khan. The Sikhs plundered his house and set it on fire. Amir Singh Sandhanwalia called him back and restored a portion of his old jagir, and granted him a new jagir worth Rs. 300 a year in the Khatak country. After sometime Ranjit Singh appointed him his Vakil for Khataks and Yusafzais. He held this office upto 1842 when he was put to death by a Nihang.

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The Battle of Hasan Abdal, 7 June, 1813

Wazir Fatah Khan entrusted Kashmir to his brother Azim Khan. He heard the news of the fall of Attock when Diwan Mohkam Chand had left the valley. He sent a detachment to attack the Diwan who could not be overtaken. He was deeply perturbed over the loss of Attock. The rulers of Kabul attached the greatest importance to the possession of Peshawar which controlled the Khaibar Pass, and to Attock which dominated the passage across the Indus to Kashmir. He reorganised his army for the battle of Attock, and allowed his soldiers one month's holiday in Kashmir to refresh themselves for the impending struggle. He arrived at Muzaffarabad towards the close of May, 1813. The advance party under Dost Muhammad Khan arrived in Hazara not far from Hasan Abdal. He gathered information about the position of the Sikhs and stopped supplies sent from Lahore from reaching the fort. The Wazir joined him there.

Daya Singh was in the fort of Attock, while Bhayya Ram Singh was at Hasan Abdal. Wazir Fatah Khan attacked Hasan Abdal on 7 June, 1813 with 2,000 Afghans. Ram Singh had only 500 horse and foot. About 50

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men were killed on both sides. Ram Singh and his men took to flight. His entire baggage, horses and camels fell into Wazir's hand. The Wazir and Dost Muhammad Khan closely besieged the fort of Attock, and cut off all supplies to it.

The Battle of Haidru, 9 July, 1813

The Maharaja was quite sure that Wazir Fatah Khan and Dost Muhammad Khan, while returning from Kashmir would try to capture Attock. He was carefully watching the movements of the Wazir. The fort of Attock was held by Daya Singh and Devi Das was with him. On 31 May, 1813, Ranjit Singh issued instructions to Munshi Devi Das to be watchful of Wazir's machinations. The same day Diwan Mohkam Chand encamped on the eastern bank of River Ravi with 10,000 horse and foot and several cannon. He arrived at Rawalpindi on 7 June. This very day the Wazir had won a victory over a Sikh contingent at Hasan Abdal, 46 km distant. On knowing of Mohkam Chand's arrival at Rawalpindi, the Wazir declared a holy war against the Sikhs. Thousands of fanatic Yusafzai and Khatak Pathans flocked to fight the infidels. From Kabul a strong contingent under princes Ayub and Abbas arrived on the banks of the Indus, but could not cross it for want of sufficient boats.

Daya Singh and Devi Das had not expected a siege of the fort. The foodstuff as well as ammunition were completely exhausted by 20 June, 1813. Frantic appeals were made to Lahore to save the garrison and the fort. The Maharaja ordered Diwan Mohkam Chand to send supplies at any cost. This message reached the Diwan on the night of 24 June, at Burhan, 12 km from Hasan Abdal on the road to Attock which was 40 km distant. At daybreak on 8 July the Diwan marched cautiously to a place half way where Fatah Khan had appointed a picket on the banks of a rivulet. The picket retired and the Diwan spent the night there. Seven quintals of grain fell into the hands of the Diwan.

The troops took their meals, bathed in the rivulet, had a short sleep, crossed the stream, and marched along its southern bank leisurely drinking water and watering their animals and all were fresh and fine on an extremely hot day. At 4 o'clock the Diwan reached the Indus, 8 km away from the fort. There the Afghan army was ready to oppose him. The vanguard under Dost Muhammad Khan consisted of *mujahidin* or fanatic frontier tribes supported by Afghan cavalry.

The Diwan organised his cavalry into four divisions in the form of a square, each side containing 2,000 men. The infantry battalion of 2,000 men was in the centre of the square. He was at the head of the infantry on

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an elephant, on whose back on both sides of the Diwan two light cannon were tied with gunners to fire. Ghaus Khan with his artillery corps was lingering in the rear away from the battlefield. He had been won over by Wazir Fatah Khan in the name of Islam.

The Ghazis delivered a ferocious assault on the front division of the Sikhs who met with a tremendously heavy fire, causing confusion in the enemy's vanguard. Then Dost Muhammad's cavalry rushed yelling and shouting. The Sikhs began to flee. Just then Ghaus Khan arrived on the scene. The Diwan asked him to order his artillery to fire. He ignored the command. The Diwan ordered Ghaus Khan's assistants Aziz Khan and Shaikh Budha to discharge their artillery. Ghaus Khan prohibited them from firing.

The Diwan realized the delicacy of the situation. The fate of the Sikhs hung in the balance. Mohkam Chand made up his mind in a minute. He loudly asked the Sikhs to hold their ground and follow him. He ordered his two guns to be fired intermittently and he rushed forward. The clouds of smoke and dust filled the whole atmosphere. A strong fiery wind was blowing from east to west blinding the Afghans and choking their nostrils. The midday heat of July proved terrible for the dwellers of the mountains. Dost Muhammad fell back. Fatah Khan took him for dead. His Ghazis and cavalry fled helter skelter towards the river. Wazir Fatah Khan realized that discretion was the better part of valour. He did not push his rearguard into the jaws of death. A flotilla of boats was kept ready. The survivors escaped to Khairabad, and many men and horses were drowned in the Indus. As this battle was fought near the village of Haidru, it is called the battle of Haidru. It took place on 9 July, 1813, Friday, (11 Asarh, 1870 Bikrami) from 4 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ranjit Singh got the news of this battle on 12 July, 1813, from a letter sent from Pind Dadan Khan by Sukh Dayal, agent of Rama Nand Sahu, stating that the battle was fought on 11 Asarh (9 July,1813). Diwan Amar Nath says that the Afghans lost 2,000 men in killed and wounded.

A letter was received at Lahore on 16 July, 1813, saying that Ghaus Khan, Darogha Topkhana neither joined himself nor allowed his men to obey the Diwan. It transpired later on that Ghaus Khan was in correspondence with Wazir Fatah Khan and had promised to remain inactive.

On 21 July, 1813, the Maharaja observed that Ghaus Khan had left nothing undone to bring about defeat. He issued orders summoning him to the court. The Khan did not dare to appear before the Maharaja, and remained at home, feigning illness.

It appears that no action was taken against Ghaus Khan an old servant

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of the family since the days of his father Mahan Singh. A newsletter dated 5 April, 1814 says:

> A letter from Aziz Khan and Shaikh Budha, the commandants, intimated that according to his orders they had reached with their battalions from the district of Chirki, and passing through Majha, had gone over to Ghaus Khan, the Darogha of the Topkhana, and that they had sent Nadhan Singh, the son of Fatah Singh Kanahya, to the Noble Sarkar, guarded by two sentinels. A reply was sent to them that they must always remain obedient to the said Khan, and write regularly to the Noble Sarkar about all events, and that their monthly allowance would soon be sent.

Ranjit Singh celebrated this victory by illuminating the cities of Lahore and Amritsar, and by showering silver rupees on the people in public places. He declared "that Diwan Mohkam Chand was preordained to be successful, for wherever he went he obtained a victory".

Diwan Radha Kishan, was the commander of Milkha Singh's regiment called Derah Pindiwala. During campaign he scaled the walls of the fort of Attock to supply food to the starving garrison. As a mark of appreciation Ranjit Singh appointed his son Devi Sahae a commander of the Ghorcharha Khas.

Nihal Singh Atariwala had exhibited great valour in the battle. He was granted a cash reward of Rs. 20,000 and two villages in jagir on the banks of River Jehlam on 21 August, 1813.

Further Attempts to get Back Attock

On 25 December, 1813, Mohkam Chand was in the fort of Attock. Fatah Khan Wazir sent his Diwan Nand Ram with a letter to Attock. The Wazir had written: "Still nothing is lost. Give the fort of Attock to me so that the relations of friendship between the two parties may become strong".

Mohkam Chand wrote in reply: "The fort of Attock would never be handed over to you, and that the country of Kashmir would soon be conquered by us".

The loss of Attock remained a sore point to Wazir Fatah Khan during the last five years of his life, 1813 to 1818. When he failed to get it by force, he descended to cajolery. In the winter of 1814, Ranjit Singh and Ram Dayal went to realize revenue and tribute from the zamindars of the Kharal tribe in the country south-west of Lahore. Just about that time

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Wazir Fatah Khan came to Multan and received a *nazar* of three lakhs of rupees from Muzaffar Khan. He encamped on the banks of River Chenab, and sent a message to the Maharaja requesting for the return of Attock to him. Ranjit Singh despatched Dal Singh Naherna and Ram Dayal to watch the Wazir's movements. On their approach the Wazir went back to the west of the Indus. Ranjit Singh returned to Lahore, and despatched Diwan Moti Ram to the Kharal country. He was given two Najib regiments, 50 Zamburaks, and a park of artillery under Ilahi Bakhsh.

Yar Muhammad's Attack on Attock, 1814

Fatah Khan Wazir had hardly crossed over the Indus, when Yar Muhammad Khan, governor of Peshawar, with the help of the Khataks of Khairabad district, attacked the fort of Attock. Hukma Singh Chimni and Sham Singh Atariwala were in the neighbourhood. They repelled Yar Muhammad Khan and drove him back to the western side of the Indus.

On 15 December, 1815, Gujar Mal Vakil presented a small bag containing a letter from Sardar Fatah Khan Wazir. It was written:

> Evacuate the fort of Attock and make it over to us. Hazrat Mahmud Shah's authority will be restored over it. Come over to this district and we will hold an interview. I will make over to your Noble Sarkar the fort of Multan after getting it evacuated by mutual help. As to the revenue tax of Kashmir it would be paid as it would be assessed by Wazir Fatah Khan.

Ranjit Singh came to know in May, 1816, that Wazir Fatah Khan had gone to Kashmir by the road of Pakhli and Dhamtaur in the Hazara hills. He appointed Ram Dayal and Dal Singh at Attock to watch his movements. Thus Attock remained a permanent part of the Sikh kingdom.

Comment

This was the first victory of the Sikh army over the Afghans in a pitched battle. It gave the Sikhs confidence of their superiority over the dreaded enemy. It sealed the fate of the Kabul Government east of the Indus and established Sikh supremacy in that region. It paved the way for the conquest of Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar. Ranjit Singh took no action against Ghaus Khan, though he publicly declared in the durbar that Ghaus Khan had behaved treacherously. He accompanied the Maharaja in his Kashmir campaign in 1814. This kind of behaviour

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deeply affected him with shame and remorse and he died shortly afterwards. The Maharaja appointed his son in the artillery department.

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CHAPTER 7

Multan

Seven times was Multan squeezed like a lemon,
Even then it stood boldly as a demon;
The last attack was made with fullest power,
After exemplary heroism it crashed like a tower.
Sawan Mal made country green,
Peasant, trader and homelife serene.

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Multan

The province of Multan was about 175 km long and 120 km wide in the broadest part. It was watered by rivers Indus, Chenab, Ravi and Satluj. The gross income was about 1⅓ crores. The province consisted of Multan, Leiah, Khangarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Jhang.

The town of Multan was the watergate of the Panjab. It was situated 7 km east of River Chenab. It stood on a ridge and was surrounded by a wall about 5 km long in circumference. The outside of the wall was about 16 metres high while from inside it varied from 3½ to 6½ metres. The wall had numerous towers, and six gates.

The fort was situated on another high mound inside the city wall. It had six sides of different length. The longest on the north-west was 400 metres. It was surrounded by its own wall which was 13 metres high from outside and about 1½ metres from inside. This wall was 5 metres thick and had 46 towers. The circumference of the fort was a little over 2,000 metres. It had four gates, Delhi Gate, Khizri Gate, Sikki Gate and Rohri Gate.

Shujabad

Shujabad was closely associated with Multan. It was situated 62 km

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from Bahawalpur and 50 km from Multan and 8 km from the left bank of River Chenab. Shujabad was not captured by the Bhangi sardars. Shuja Khan lived there upto his death in 1776. It was laid out on a square piece of land. It had a rampart mounted with guns, a deep and wide pucca moat, a gate on each side, called Multani, Mori, Rashid Shah and Chautaqa. Its big bazars lay from north to south and east to west cutting each other. Muzaffar Khan constructed eight palatial buildings for residence of all his eight sons. The most notable of them were Mubarik Mahal, Saman Burj and Jahaz Mahal.

Mohan Lal visited Shujabad in December, 1835. He wrote that its considerable size and lofty fortifications gave it a striking appearance. It was noted for the manufacture of cotton goods and wood-turnery. There were many extensive and luxurious gardens. The soil was fertile and highly cultivated. For 7 or 8 km to the south there were immense fields of sugarcane. The cotton plant was also abundantly grown. The cultivators were all Hindu Khatris. There were 360 shops richly provided with goods. Many merchants carried on a thriving trade with Khorasan and Turkistan.

Multan under Afghans

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Ahmad Shah Durrani conquered Multan province from the Mughal Empire in 1752. He entrusted it to Shuja Khan, a member of his own Sadozai clan. From 1771 to 1779 it was held by Bhangi sardars Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh. During this period Shuja Khan lived in his newly founded town Shujabad. In 1779 Taimur Shah Durrani, son of Ahmad shah, reconquered it and placed it under Shuja Khan's son Muzaffar Khan Sadozai who ruled over it for forty years. He was a feudatory of Kabul till 1809 at the fall of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk. Afterwards he became independent.

Ranjit Singh's First Expedition, 1802

Ranjit Singh invaded Multan seven times. His policy was not to kill his powerful enemy at one stroke, but to go on striking at him until he grew so weak as to submit voluntarily or to be defeated easily without much loss in men, money and material. The Maharaja led the first expedition against Multan in the winter of 1802.

Nizam-ud-din, the Afghan chief of Kasur, had submitted to Ranjit Singh after a great struggle. Muzaffar Khan was his great supporter. The Nawab met him 50 km from his capital, offered submission and some presents and promised to pay tribute.

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Second Expedition, 1805

After celebrating Dasahra in October, 1805, Ranjit Singh, accompanied by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, reached Jhang. Ahmad Khan Sial fled to Multan. He received tribute from the Baluch chief of Sahiwal, and then advanced towards Multan. The Nawab offered him rich presents and Rs. 70,000 in cash. He then returned to Jhang. On hearing the news of the arrival of Holkar and Lake in the Panjab, he hurriedly returned to Lahore.

Third Invasion, 1807

In 1805, Ahmad Khan Sial of Jhang had fled to Multan. He and Qutb-ud-din of Kasur persuaded Nawab Muzaffar Khan to organise a tough resistance against Ranjit Singh, in 1805-6, when the Maharaja was busy in Holkar-Lake affair. Consequently, great preparation was made. After Baisakhi in April, 1807, Ranjit Singh advanced towards Multan. Dipalpur was seized on the way. The city of Multan was besieged. The rich inhabitants took shelter inside the fort. Through the efforts of Sardar Fatah Singh Kalianwala and the Nawab of Bahawalpur peace was made. The Nawab offered some money and 5 horses as *nazar*. The siege was raised. Ranjit Singh returned to the capital in time before the heat waves and dust storms of Multan started their ravages. In 1809, after the Treaty of Amritsar, the Nawab of Multan in vain tried to seek British protection.

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Fourth Incursion, 1810

Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, king of Afghanistan, lost his throne in 1809. He fled towards the Panjab. Ranjit Singh met him at Khushab in the beginning of February, 1810. Ranjit Singh offered to conquer Multan for him. The Shah did not trust him. The Maharaja knew that the Shah planned to seize it. He wanted to forestall the Shah. He hurried towards Multan. Having settled the affair of Uch on 15 February, 1810, the Maharaja appeared before Multan on 20 February, 1810. On Muzaffar Khan's refusal to pay a tribute of 3 lakhs, Ranjit Singh captured the city on 25 February and laid siege to the fort.

The Maharaja reconnoitred, selected places for fixing batteries, and assigned different places to his commanders. Supplies were arranged by road and river from Lahore and Amritsar. The Nawab also had collected plentiful stores of provisions and water in the fort. Nihal Singh Atariwala led the assault, which was repulsed. The Sikhs laid a mine under the wall of a bastion. The besieged dug up a counter-mine, and blew up one of the batteries of the Sikhs. Atar Singh Dhari was killed and Nihal Singh

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Atariwala was seriously wounded. The young daring Hari Singh Nalwa while climbing up was badly burnt by a firepot, thrown upon him from the fort walls. Muzaffar Khan in vain sought British assistance. The siege lasted for two months. The Nawab yielded. He gave to Ranjit Singh Rs.1,80,000 and 20 horses. The Maharaja returned to his capital on 25 April, 1810.

Griffin says that the Maharaja requested the Governor-General to send a contingent of troops to help him in capturing Multan. He suggested the route to be followed south of the Satluj and not through Jalandhar and Lahore. The proposal did not materialise.

Fifth Expedition, 1812

In February, 1812, Dal Singh was sent at the head of a strong force to bring the annual tribute from Multan. The Nawab deputed his vakil, Mohsin Shah, with Dal Singh to settle the amount. Mohsin Shah waited upon the Maharaja at Lahore on 15 March, 1812. Ranjit Singh demanded Rs. 80,000. Mohsin Shah got the amount settled at Rs. 70,000 to be paid in instalments. On 8 April, 1812, at the time of Mohsin Shah's departure he was granted a fine woollen shawl, a roll of Gulbadan, a roll of white cloth, Rs. 400 in cash and some other gifts for himself and one turban, one fine woollen shawl, one roll of brocade, 4 rolls of white cloth for Nawab Muzaffar Khan and he was allowed to leave.

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Sixth Campaign, 1815

As the annual tributes had fallen into arrears, the Maharaja left for Multan after the rainy season of 1815. Akali Phula Singh at the head of his Nihangs, all intoxicated with *bhang*, scaled the walls of the town. Muzaffar Khan paid two lakhs of rupees and the siege was raised.

Tributes Realized, 1816-17

In the beginning of 1816, a deputation headed by Diwan Bhawani Das Peshauri with Prince Kharak Singh, Diwan Moti Ram and Hari Singh Nalwa was sent to Multan. On Nawab's resistance Faqir Aziz-ud-din was sent from Lahore to negotiate with the Nawab. The Faqir reached Serai Sidhu 60 km from Multan on 6 April, 1816. He met the Nawab at Multan and realized Rs. 1,30,000 from him.

Early in 1817, Bhawani Das Peshauri and Hari Singh Nalwa were sent to Multan to realize the tribute. The Nawab paid Rs. 10,000. M'Gregor and Griffin hold the view that the Diwan had been bribed by the Nawab. The Maharaja fined him Rs. 10,000 and imprisoned him. In the beginning

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of March, 1817, Ram Dayal, son of Diwan Moti Ram, was sent to Multan, with instructions that if the Nawab did not pay tribute, his country should be devastated.

Afterwards he was directed to realize tribute from the Chief of Derah Ghazi Khan, and on his refusal to pay to lay waste his country. Ram Dayal concluded a treaty with Muzaffar Khan and returned to Lahore with a *nazar* of Rs. 61,000.

On 5 August, 1817, a report from Multan reached Lahore that the Nawab had started extortions in the city, and people were being put to great hardship. They were "praying that somehow the English Sahibs might come and take over the administration of their country".

The Nawab felt disgusted with frequent demands of tributes without any regularity and fixity. He made up his mind to resist militarily against any further demand. He repaired the fort, mounted guns on its ramparts and put it in a state of defence. Provisions were collected to last for six months. A small force of 3,000 strong, was kept in the fort. A sufficient quantity of water was stored. There must have been one or more wells in the fort also.

Missar Diwan Chand

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On the death of Diwan Mohkam Chand, the Maharaja's first commander-in-chief, in 1814, this post had remained vacant till 1817. In January, 1818, Ranjit Singh conferred this highest office under him on Missar Diwan Chand. Diwan Chand was the son of a poor Brahman shopkeeper of village Gondlanwala in Sialkot district. Diwan Chand was a weigher (*tola*) of grain in the service of the local zaminder Nodh Singh Nikka(short sized). During one of Ranjit Singh's tours, this young man attracted the notice of the Maharaja on account of his intelligent looks and probity of character which were certified by his master. The Maharaja recruited him as a clerk in the accounts branch of Ordnance Department. This happened in 1812. In 1814 Ghaus Khan, head of this department, died. Ranjit Singh gave this post to Diwan Chand along with accounts. Prinsep says he rose "by his merit and activity from a low position to be commandant of Artillery".

Conquest of Multan, 1818

Muzaffar Khan's resources had been exhausted by annual exactions and ravages of his country. It was felt that for want of funds he would not be able to raise a well-equipped army to oppose the Lahore forces. The time chosen was most suitable. Kabul government was in a state of

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disorganisation and turmoil. Wazir Fatah Khan, the strong man, was involved in the siege of Herat, and no help could come to Muzaffar Khan from his overlord.

The Maharaja decided on the conquest of Multan. All the boats on the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jehlam were requisitioned to carry supplies and stores for the troops. Arrangements for postal stations at short intervals between Lahore and Multan were made for speedy communication of news.

In January, 1818, Ranjit Singh appointed Missar Diwan Chand, Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh Army, numbering about 25,000 well chosen horse and foot with a strong park of artillery. Several Sikh sardars refused to serve under an upstart Brahman "a man of yesterday". Ranjit Singh nominated 16-year-old Prince Kharak Singh head of the expedition, though the actual command remained with Diwan Chand. The Prince's mother accompanied him for his protection. She set up her camp at Kot Kamalia to supervise supplies. The following commanders served under Diwan Chand: Dal Singh Naherna, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Ram Dayal, Jodh Singh Kalsia, Hari Singh Nalwa.

The fort of Khangarh and Muzaffargarh were first captured. The city of Multan fell in February, 1818. Then the fort was besieged. Twelve batteries were installed on all sides of the fort. Trenches were dug. On a special request from the Missar, 500 *beldars* (diggers) were sent from Lahore in March, 1818.

The Nawab had a strong garrison of 3,000 men with large supplies of foodstuff and water. The besieged made many sorties and desperate encounters.[1] Storming parties were replused with heavy losses. They pushed down all the damaged material consisting of stones, bricks, and burning charcoal and boiling oil from the top on the besiegers and attackers.

The daily bombardment of every part of the fort produced no effect on the fort walls. In one assault the Sikh army lost 1,800 men. Diwan Chand sent for Ahmad Shah Durrani's famous Zamzama gun. It was carried from Amritsar to Multan in 12 days. It used a ball weighing 40 kilograms.

Along with the despatch of the gun, Ranjit Singh issued instructions to Diwan Chand to negotiate for the surrender of the fort offering a big jagir and the post of governor of a province. Diwan Bhawani Das and Chaudhri Qadir Bakhsh were deputed to negotiate offering Shujabad and Khangarh in jagir. The Nawab appeared agreeable, but his supporters

[1]A stirring description of these encounters is given in a Panjabi ballad by Ganesh Das Pingle.

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opposed it. They said an honourable death was much better than a disgraceful living. The Nawab was given 10 days to make up his mind. No reply was received.

The Zamzama gun was fired four times. It made two breaches in the fort wall opposite Khizri gate. The storming parties tried to force their way into the fort through these breaches. The first batch consisted of Dogra Rajputs of Jammu and the Ramgarhia contingent. They were thrown back.

On 20 June, 1818, Sadhu Singh Akali, at the head of his Nihangs, rushed into one breach, and killing all guards entered the fort. The other assaulting parties followed his example. Nawab Muzaffar Khan standing in a breach with sword in hand fought hard along with his four sons in a heroic combat, and fell dead. His two sons Shah Nawaz Khan and Haq Nawaz Khan were killed. One son Sarfraz Khan was captured hidden in a cellar. The other Zulfiqar Khan surrendered. Out of the garrison of 3,000 men in the fort only 500 survived.

The news of the fall of Multan was brought to Lahore by a fast messenger on 26 Jeth, 1875 or 29 June, 1818. The harbinger was awarded a pair of gold bangles and a *khilat*. The cities of Lahore and Amritsar were illuminated for a week. The Maharaja rode on an elephant through the bazars showering silver rupees on the crowds. Grateful offerings were made to holy shrines of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

The fort was thoroughly sacked. A large booty fell into the hands of the troops. A special detachment under Jodh Singh Kalsia, Dal Singh Naherna and Deva Singh Doabia and two Najib battalions were left at Multan to hold the place and to help in the establishment of peace and order.

The rest of the army was ordered to return to Lahore promptly. On the arrival of the troops in their cantonments a proclamation was issued that nobody was to leave his barracks and that the property acquired at Multan belonged to the State as it was the practice in British India, and it must be returned to the Government Treasury and Toshakhana within three days. The defaulters were threatened with fine, imprisonment and death. It was announced that the discipline in the army would come to an end if the soldiers were avaricious. The national troops were the soldiers of God in the service of the country. Such was the dread of Ranjit Singh's orders that all soldiers, officers and jagirdars reluctantly returned every article of spoil. About five lakhs of rupees worth articles were surrendered by troops. According to Griffin the plunder of Multan was estimated at two million sterling or two crores of rupees.

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Special orders were issued that sardars and soldiers killed in the campaign would be suitably compensated by employment of their sons and relations.

A strong contingernt was sent to Shujabad, 38 km distant, another stronghold of Muzaffar Khan. It fell without any resistance. Five cannons were captured from there.

On account of heavy bombardment during the siege several breaches in the fort were made, and several bastions and parapets were dismantled. The work of repair and construction of the new buildings in the fort was taken in hand immediately after its occupation. The formal entry into the fort was made on 14 Har 1875. The total expenditure on the buildings is shown in the records at Rs. 38,284-11-6 from 1 Har, 1875 to Bhadon, 1896, in 15 months.

At a grand durbar held at Lahore, Ranjit Singh conferred the following high sounding title on Diwan Chand:

> Khair Khwah, Basafa, Zafar Jang, Fatah Nasib, Missar Diwan Chand *Bahadur*. (Well-wisher, Honourable, Conqueror in War, Man of Victorious Destiny, Missar Diwan Chand the Brave.)

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He was granted a *khilat* and a jagir. Sarfraz Khan and his wounded brother Zulfiqar Khan were brought to Lahore with their families and were granted a jagir of Rs. 30,000 and a cash allowance for maintenance. Military officers were given *khilats*, jagirs, jewellery and cash.

Administration of Multan

Sukh Dayal Khatri was appointed the first governor of Multan who held Jhang also in farm. He failed to pay his annual tribute, and was imprisoned in 1819. Sham Singh Peshauriya succeeded him on a contract to pay 6½ lakh of rupees annually. Ranjit Singh stayed at Multan for 3 months, and for inefficiency Sham Singh was also imprisoned. Then Badan Hazari became governor. He was a thoroughly incompetent and corrupt official. He possessed neither courage nor character. About him Major Edwards observed that "he was put into the government as a joke". He was shortly afterwards imprisoned, and on release was appointed a storekeeper in Marwat on one rupee daily. Badan Hazari was succeeded by Mitha Mal Shikarpuria. Jamadar Baj Singh was put in charge of the fort. All these changes resulted in complete ruin of the province. Cultivable land became barren. Trade and industry greatly declined. Robbery and theft became the order of the day.

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Sawan Mal

In 1820 the control of Multan's finances was given to Sawan Mal. He was the third and youngest son of Hoshnak Rae, a Chopra Khatri of Akalgarh in Gujranwala district. Sawan Mal had acquired a good knowledge of Persian and Arabic. He began life as a clerk in his home town. After sometime he was promoted to the post of Naib Tahsildar of Hafizabad. He made a name for just and impartial decisions, sympathetic treatment of subjects, moderation of assessments, and development of agriculture and trade. It was in this capacity that he came to the notice of Ranjit Singh during a tour. In 1821, he was given administrative control over one half of the province. He first of all turned his attention to establish peace and order. He appointed Daya Ram, a native of Gujranwala, to the task of suppressing robberies and thefts. He immediately attacked the notorious freebooter Basehu Sangrial and killed him. The other thieves and robbers were so severely punished that the name Sawan Mal became a law by itself. In 1829 the whole province was entrusted to his care. The stories of his justice and impartiality became widespread. He imprisoned his eldest son Ram Das for having let loose his horse in a green field. The youth could not bear this disgrace and committed suicide in 1831.

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Sawan Mal gave liberal loans to the zamindars. Barren lands were brought under cultivation. Irrigation was provided in the form of inundation canals and wells. In the district of Multan alone he laid out 500 km long canals. Assessment being very reasonable most of the barren land was brought under the plough.

Sawan Mal maintained eight regiments of Pathans and two of Sikhs to preserve peace and order. Thieves and robbers did not exist. Trade and industry flourished. In 1826 the Kadmon Ka Mela at Multan was attended by five to six thousand people. Some Baluchis began to plunder the city. Diwan Sawan Mal rushed out at the head of a strong contingent. Three marauders were captured alive. Six were shot dead. The rest fled away. Budh Singh Kotwal was imprisoned for neglect of duty.

On 20 August, 1835, the Maharaja said that "the Big Kardar, Diwan Sawan Mal, was an honest, humble man, always ready to serve". On 16 September, 1835, Captain Wade who had travelled right across the whole province of Multan remarked that Sawan Mal was an honest and faithful man, who took great interest in making the country prosperous and the people were very grateful to him, adding "that there was no other man with the Maharaja, like the said Diwan and would never be". On 11 January, 1836, Mackeson told the Maharaja that Sawan Mal "was

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incomparable in the control and administration of his own state".

On 15 August, 1836, the Maharaja observed that "Sawan Mal could wield pen and sword equally well."

The *Ludhiana Akhbar* of 9 September, 1837, stated that Diwan Sawan Mal's administration satisfied and pleased everybody in the province of Multan.

On 16 April, 1838, Maharaja Ranjit Singh again observed that Diwan Sawan Mal "was an honest man and one who made his country ever more prosperous".

Von Orlich in 1843 on a mission to Lahore wrote: "Mooltan, which is governed by a Hindoo, enjoys the best administration, and Kashmir is the most plundered and desolated".

In 1837, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent a note to Diwan Sawan Mal asking him to send Rs. 21,000 from his own pocket, Rs. 50,000 from the zamindars, Rs. 8,000 from the kardars, Rs. 23,000 from the troops and Rs. 6,000 from the bankers and merchants of Multan and Derah Ghazi Khan by way of *tambol* on the occasion of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh's marriage. The Diwan faithfully carried out the instructions without any oppression.

In order to avoid sex offences, Diwan Sawan Mal issued strict orders in 1836 that under no circumstances the parents should keep their grown up daughters unmarried. In case of disobedience they were severely punished. State officers were instructed to arrange marriages of grown up girls and not to leave the matter in the hands of their parents. The Nawab of Bahawalpur appreicated the orders so much that he also enforced them in his state.

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The Baluchis

In the Sikh kingdom the Baluchis were found in the southern frontier, on the western side of River Indus in the districts of Derah Ghazi Khan, Derah Ismail Khan and Muzaffargarh. The Baluchis gave a lot of trouble to the Sikh government. Diwan Sawan Mal, Governor of Multan province, introduced cash payment of revenue instead of in kind. This measure created great disaffection among them, and they created disturbances. Sawan Mal built forts at Dajal (77 km south of Derah Ghazi Khan), Harrand (situated in Derah Ghazi Khan district at the foot of Sulaiman hills), and Amarkot and strongly garrisoned them. In 1833 he led an expedition against Bahram Khan, a Mazari chief. Rojhan, capital of the Mazari tribe (situated on the western bank of the Indus below Derah Ghazi Khan town) was reduced.

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The Trade of Multan

The city of Multan was a great commercial and banking centre of the south-west Panjab. It maintained brisk trade with Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Khorasan, Iran and Turkistan. In India it exported goods as far as Calcutta and Haidarabad (Deccan). Mohan Lal was at Multan from December, 1835 to the end of February, 1836. He wrote that Turkistan, especially the city of Bokhara, supplied Multan with silk of three kinds: Lab-e-Abi, Charkhi and Kohkari. These silks were purchased at Bokhara from 7 to 12 rupees per kg and sold at Multan from Rs. 10 to 15. A camel-load weighing 2½ quintals of the first kind of silk cost at Bokhara 440 *tillas* or Rs. 1,837 and paise 50, one *tilla* being equal in value to nearly Rs. 6½ Nanakshahi. It took Lohani merchants about 50 days to reach from Bokhara to Derah Ismail Khan, and they paid duties at many places on the way amounting to Rs. 320 per camel-load.

Vigne noted that Multan imported nearly 300 quintals of raw silk from Turkistan every year. It was manufactured in 150 workshops. One man could finish an ordinary piece of silk 3 metres long and half a metre wide in six days; but a piece of fine workmanship required 16 days. The silk fabrics were chintz, daryai, lungi and gulbadan. Alexander Burnes remarked that silk woven at Multan could be had in all colours. It was not so delicate in texture as the lungis of Bahawalpur. Ranjit Singh encouraged silk weaving at Multan after its conquest. He gave no other cloth to his courtiers and visitors. The silk cloth of Multan was worn as sashes and scarfs by all Sikh sardars and soldiers. He also stimulated its export to Khorasan by levying moderate duties. In the weaving of silk cloth, Multan was second only to Amritsar. Annually Multan produced 40,000 metres of silk fabrics and two lakh metres of silk and cotton mixtures.

Multan was also noted for carpets and embroidery, and Shujakhani chintzes, indigo and tobacco. It produced 600 quintals of tobacco of red colour. It was sold at 2½ kg for a rupee. The inferior quality was available from 4 to 8 kg for a rupee.

Horses from Turkey, Iraq and Khorasan were bought and sold here. Fruit like apples, grapes, melons, pears and pomegranates were imported from Kandhar in plenty. It was celebrated for mangoes, dates, mustard oil, washing soap, pottery and toys.

R. Leech in 1837 mentioned the leading merchants with their working capital. Their names are given below.

Roshan Das Multani	Rs. 1,25,000
Manu Malik Multani	Rs. 80,000

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Madho Das Multani	Rs. 80,000
Bhara Malik Multani	Rs. 50,000
Sham Singh Multani	Rs. 50,000
Naraian Das Multani	Rs. 40,000

In Multan there were forty shroffs or money-changers who mainly belonged to Shikarpur. Banking constituted a large proportion of the business of Multan. The prosperity of the city in all respects was on the increase.

From Afghanistan the imports of Multan consisted of numerous articles such as silk, isbang, majith, buzghung, qirmiz, gul, fruits, asafoetida, zira, mastagi, kahzaban, vinegar; from Amritsar English cloth, turmeric, ginger, sugar, copper; from other parts of India English and Indian cloth, sealing wax, lead, tin, copper, brass, pot and kinari; from Shikarpur, pearls; from Derah Ghazi Khan, opium, charas, snuff and butter; and from Dajal, oil. The total value of all these imports was about Rs.15,000 in a year.

The principal marts of Multan were Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Derah Ismail Khan, Leiah, Shujabad, and Mithankot. They had commercial transactions with the merchants of Shikarpur, Kandhar, Herat, Bokhara, Kabul, Peshawar, Amritsar, Sind and other parts of India.

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At Multan a customs duty on silk was charged at the rate of 50 paise a kg on goods going out and 75 paise on those coming in; on indigo Rs.16 and paise 25 per quintal; on English cloth 7 per cent of the value; on broad-cloth 62 paise a metre; on spices at the rate of 8%; on cotton cloth Rs. 3 and paise 28 per quintal; on fruits from 5 to 6 rupees per camel load; Rs. 2 on a camel and Rs. 5 per horse.

The goods were carried on camels as they were cheaper than mules. Bullock carts were of no use in the desert. There was no system of insurance. A Hundi system existed, but it was adopted only by the merchants of Multan and Amritsar. The hundi charges on silk cloth from Multan to Amritsar amounted to Rs. 125 per quintal, and on raw silk Rs. 42 and paise 50 a quintal. The owner paid duties at both places. The person who took charge of the goods bore the expenses on the road.

Comment

The financial resources of Nawab Muzaffar Khan had been greatly reduced by almost annual tributes and ravages of his country. The Nawab met a hero's death. His two surviving sons were granted a jagir worth

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Rs. 30,000. The youngest son Zulfiqar Khan never paid full respect to the Maharaja even in a public durbar. He replied to Ranjit Singh's questions while sitting keeping his hand on the hilt, looking menacingly and in an offensive tone. The Maharaja ignored him. Baluchis raided Multan territory on mares and not on horses, because mares did not neigh during the raid. Sawan Mal turned the desert into a smiling cultivated plain. To stop elopement and adultery Sawan Mal ordered all girls of fourteen and above to be married. If parents failed, the Government married them with suitable boys. Rani Daya Kaur's son was named Multana Singh.

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CHAPTER 8

Kashmir

Kashmir, the land of shawls, snow and sun,
Was being eaten by Afghans like a bun;
The Sikh rule was better, but not the best.
In its development the Maharaja could not take much interest.

The Valley

Kashmir is a land of delight for outsiders. For them it is a paradise. They enjoy wandering in it. They are enraptured with it. The seduction lies purely in its natural beauty. For its inhabitants it presented a different picture altogether in medieval times.

Kashmir is the most beautiful part of India. The enchanting scenery, captivating valleys at a height of over 5,000 feet above sea level, high snow-covered glorious mountains, magnificent lakes and rivers, salubrious climate, charming flowers, delicious fruits, and fascinating Mughal gardens have made it one of the most blessed spots on earth. Europeans generally compare it with Switzerland, which has a fine combination of lakes and mountains. But it is on a much smaller scale. There is no complete circle of snowy ranges on a wide sweep. The valleys of Switzerland are like the side valleys of Kashmir. The sight of stupendous mountains and the romantic beauty of the valley surpass all the rest in the world.

From east to west the valley of Kashmir is about 150 km long and from north to south 80 km broad. There are three valleys, the main Jehlam valley and the smaller valleys of rivers Lidar and Sindh, both tributaries of the Jehlam. The whole valley is surrounded by high mountains. Formerly there were seven passes leading into Kashmir, four from the south, one from the west and two from the north. Later on their number increased to twelve. The famous passes in Ranjit Singh's time were:

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Toshamaidan Pass (10,500 feet), Bahramgala Pass (11,400 feet), Budil Pass (14,120 feet), and the Banihal Pass (9,200 feet). Lord Roberts described the fertility of the soil of Kashmir thus:

> The soil is extremely productive, anything will grow in it, put a stick into ground and in an extraordinary short space of time, it becomes a tree and bears fruit. It was during his time that the British Government had made full preparations to convert Kashmir into a British Crown Colony to settle 30,000 British soldiers to check Russia, and the construction of a railway in the valley had been sanctioned. The scheme was dropped on political grounds.

The Pir Panjal range extends from Muzaffarabad to the neighbourhood of Kishtwar on the Chenab. It is a massive mountain range. River Jehlam flows right across the valley for 250 km up to Baramula. In 1822, Moorcroft noted that the river was navigable for 80 km. In 1835, this river had in all thirteen bridges including seven bridges in Srinagar alone.

The climate of the valley is described in a proverb thus:

Garmash na garm ast,
Sardash na sard ast.
It is warm but not hot (in summer).
It is cool but not cold (in winter).

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Another observation is that in Kashmir *pankha* and *postin* (fan and fur) go together.

The famous produce of the valley was high quality saffron. The saffron fields of Pampur extended for about 20 km. During Ranjit Singh's reign one kilogram of best saffron fetched Rs. 24. The valley was celebrated all the world over for the manufacture of shawls.

Srinagar

The city of Srinagar is situated at a height of 5,276 feet. River Jehlam flows through it. It extends for about 5 km on each side of the Jehlam. In breadth it was about 3 km. The river was crossed by means of wooden bridges. The houses were generally 2 or 3 storeys high, built of brick and mortar, with a large intermixture of timber. On the wooden roof was laid a covering of earth. It contributed to the warmth of the house during winter, and in summer was planted with flowers. The Governor of Kashmir resided in a fortress called Shergarh occupying the south-east corner of the city.

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Hurry-scurry for Kashmir, 1799

On the withdrawal of Shah Zaman from the Panjab in March, 1799, Ranjit Singh thought of capturing Kashmir. First he recovered his old fort of Rohtas, left Milkha Singh undisturbed in the possession of Rawalpindi, but deprived him of Hasan Abdal, and planted his own thana or military post there. The direct road from Kabul to Kashmir passed through that place. Shah Zaman was not likely to return to the Panjab in the near future. The Governor of Kashmir, Mir Hazar Khan (1793-1800) was persecuting the Shias and the Pandits. "Many of their leaders were put in sack bags and then drowned in the Dal Lake".

Ranjit Singh wanted to take advantage of this situation. He organized an expedition under Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat, his father's sister's husband. The force had not gone far beyond Bhimbar when he recalled it, as he did not think it proper to provoke Shah Zaman. He felt that he must concentrate on the occupation of Lahore first.

Spies sent to Kashmir, 1808

Captain A. Mathews was at Lahore in April, 1808. He noted that Ranjit Singh had sent spies to Kashmir to report about the condition of the road from Bhimbar to Srinagar, and political situation in the valley. In order to secure the road leading to the valley of Kashmir, the Maharaja subjugated Bhimbar in 1811, and Rajauri in 1812.

Ata Muhammad Khan

Ata Muhammad Khan son of Late Wazir Sher Muhammad Khan, and grandson of Shah Vali Khan Bamzai, was the Governor of Kashmir from 1800 to 1805, and again from 1809 to 1813. He was a thorough libertine. His agent was an old woman named Kashib, who informed the Governor about the beautiful girls in respectable families. The Muslims welcomed her, but Hindus who were mainly Pandits were terribly afraid of her. Many parents cut off the hair and noses of their daughters to save them from the clutches of the licentious governor.

Wazir Fatah Khan

Wazir Fatah Khan of Kabul wanted to expel Ata Muhammad Khan from Kashmir for the following reasons:

1. He had helped Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk in capturing Peshawar in 1810.
2. He had paid no tribute to Kabul.
3. He owed no allegiance to Wazir Fatah Khan.

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4. Kashmir was the richest province under Kabul. The Wazir wished to seize the accumulated treasure of the Governor, and to bring the province under his control.

The Wazir was afraid of Ranjit Singh. When he would be in Kashmir at the head of his army, Ranjit Singh might capture Attock and Peshawar and would thus cut him off from Kabul. He desired that the Sikh army under its commander-in-chief should accompany him in a joint expedition to Kashmir.

The Maharaja was also anxious to send an expedition to Kashmir. He wished to possess knowledge of the mountain passes and the nature of the valley. He desired that his soldiers should have experience of fighting in snowfall or even in blizzard. But the most cherished object of the Maharaja was to secure the release of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk from captivity in Kashmir. The Shah's chief wife Wafa Begam had promised Koh-e-Nur diamond in return for her husband's safe arrival at Lahore.

Both the heads of their governments met at Rohtas on 1 December, 1812. Ranjit Singh offered the Wazir a force of 12,000 chosen Sikh soldiers under Diwan Mohkam Chand, and to provide facilities for an Afghan march through the hill states under him.

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The newsletter dated 13 November, 1813, in Monograph no.17 states that Wazir Fatah Khan had agreed to the joint expedition to Kashmir on the following conditions:

1. To pay to Ranjit Singh eleven lakhs of rupees annually regarding Kashmir.
2. To deliver him the fort of Multan.
3. To appoint one of his brothers and some troops at Maharaja's court at Lahore.

The meeting at Rohtas was attended by a few brothers of Wazir Fatah Khan. They planned to assassinate Ranjit Singh. One of them even gave a secret signal to his accomplices, but Ranjit Singh was alert, and his troops were ready to fight. Besides Rohtas was situated in Ranjit Singh's territory, and Peshawar was nearly 300 km away. They could not escape in safety.

The Joint Expedition to Kashmir, 1812-13

The Afghan army was under Wazir Fatah Khan. The Sikh force was in command of Diwan Mohkam Chand with Dal Singh Naherna as his

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deputy. The Diwan marched from Gujrat via Bhimbar. At Rajauri he joined Fatah Khan. On 13 December, 1812, Qutb-ud-din Kasuriya reported from Rajauri that there was a heavy snowfall. Fatah Khan Wazir and Mohkam Chand were proceeding towards Kashmir. The Maharaja wrote to him that he must accompany Fatah Khan and help him wholeheartedly. Whatever money he wanted for his expenses should be taken from the agent of Rama Nand Sahu who was present there. In Pir Panjal mountains they were overtaken by a heavy snow storm. The Wazir was not inclined to associate the Sikhs with his Afghan soldiers. Besides he had achieved the neutrality of the Sikhs. His soldiers were inured to the severity of winter, snowfalls and blizzards. He left behind Mohkam Chand without informing him and pushed on by double marches into the valley.

The Diwan saw Fatah Khan's design. He took Rajauri chief into confidence, promising him a jagir of Rs. 25,000 annually, if he would show him a shorter route to Srinagar. As a result the Diwan accompanied by Jodh Singh Kalsia and Nihal Singh Atariwala, overtook the Wazir before Srinagar, and participated in the capture of the Shergarh fort and Hari Parbat as well as in reducing the valley about the middle of February, 1813.

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It was reported to Ranjit Singh that Fatah Khan Wazir and Ata Muhammad went to take a hot bath. Both entered the hamam. Fatah Khan had arranged the water to be made very hot. His men kept a vigil outside. The Wazir threatened and demanded the buried treasure from Ata Muhammad. He gave 40 lakhs of rupees and some jewellery and thus obtained his release.

The Diwan took jewellery and ornaments worth five lakhs from Ata Muhammad's Wazir Ghulam Muhammad and secured the release of Shuja-ul-Mulk from Koh-e-Maran fort. Diwan Kirpa Ram in his book *Gulzar-e-Kashmir* states that Fatah Khan gave to Diwan Mohkam Chand a *hundi* of 8 lakhs of rupees. It means that the Wazir fulfilled one term of the agreement by remitting a total sum of 13 lakhs being nearly one-third of the booty.

Before leaving for Lahore, Diwan Mohkam Chand paid a visit to Mattan, a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage. He was received by 2,000 *sadhus* wearing long hair and beards residing at the temple. In view of the Attock affair, the Diwan made a hurried retreat through Bahramgala-Rajauri-Bhimbar route.

Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk was safely brought to Lahore. Wazir Fatah Khan dismissed Ata Muhammad Khan and appointed his own brother Muhammad

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Azim Khan governor of Kashmir. Ata Muhammad's brother Jahandad Khan fearing his own dismissal surrendered the fort of Attock to Ranjit Singh in return for a jagir.

Preparations for the Conquest of Kashmir, 1813

The possession of the fort of Attock in March, 1813, of the world-famous Koh-e-Nur diamond in June, 1813, and the victory in the battle of Haidru in July, 1813, highly elated the spirit of Ranjit Singh. He thought he must seize Kashmir as early as possible.

The Maharaja had already subjugated the hill chieftains south of Pir Panjal range which formed a natural wall to the valley of Kashmir. They included Alam Khan, Raja of Akhnur, Sultan Khan, Raja of Bhimbar, Aghar Khan, Raja of Rajauri and Ruhullah Khan, Raja of Punchh.

In October, 1813, Ranjit Singh visited Jawalamukhi and Kangra to pray at the holy temples. From there he went to Sialkot, Wazirabad and Jehlam. On 11 November, 1813, he arrived at Rohtas. All jagirdars and hill chiefs were summoned for inspection of their quota of troops. Those guilty of short number or poor quality of soldiers and their equipment were heavily fined. Camel artillery was also reviewed. He sent troops to occupy passes beyond Rajauri and to select places for storage of grain and ammunition. Having made these arrangements for his proposed expedition to Kashmir next year, he returned to Lahore on 26 December, 1813.

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In April, 1814, the Maharaja began to mature his plans. Mohkam Chand was seriously ill, in fact he was a dying man, and he could not lead the expedition. He advised the Maharaja not to pursue his scheme saying that the time was inopportune. Fatah Kahn Wazir at Kabul and his brother Azim Khan at Srinagar were at the height of their power. The hill chiefs south of Pir Panjal were hostile. The commissariate and transport were not in proper shape. Ranjit Singh did not agree. He felt confident about the fidelity of Kohistan chiefs, and of the ability of his own military wings.

The Expedition

After celebrating Holi in March, 1814, at Amritsar, Ranjit Singh collected his army at Sialkot and paid up all their dues. They were asked to be ready for marching to Kashmir. He then arrived at Gujrat. The Sikh army reached there in May, 1814. On 1 June, 1814, the revenue collector of Gujrat was ordered to send 200 quintals of baked millets to Rajauri. On 2 June, 1814, the *thanadar* of Lahore was ordered to load Rs. 50,000

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on camels and send them to him at Gujrat.

The Maharaja reached Bhimbar on 4 June, 1814. The whole army arrived at Rajauri on 11 June. Aghar Khan of Rajauri misguided Ranjit Singh. At his suggestion heavy guns were left at Rajauri and only light guns were loaded on camels. Further the Sikh army was divided into two parts. One force consisting of 30,000 men under Ram Dayal, a dashing young man of 15 years, with Jamadar Khushhal Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa was ordered to march by the Bahramgala Pass to Baramula 50 km west of Srinagar. The other force under Ranjit Singh himself advanced to Toshamaidan Pass to emerge on Shupian, 50 km south of Srinagar. The two divisions were separated by high mountains and remained out of touch with each other. A vigilant and valiant enemy could destory both the forces. Thus Aghar Khan had done good service to Muhammad Azim Khan, Governor of Kashmir, in the disguise of a faithful chief of Ranjit Singh.

The main army under the Maharaja marched to Punchh on 15 June, 1814. On 16 June he was 20 km beyond Rajauri. Sukh Dayal Sahu was ordered to send 800 quintals of flour to Bahramgala Pass. Foodstuff was distributed among troops for 8 days on 17 June. Mazhar Ali, superintendent of Topkhana, was ordered to send his artillery to Toshamaidan Pass. In a narrow mountain defile Ruhullah Khan of Punchh blocked his passage. In the fight about 500 men were killed and wounded on both sides. Aghar Khan joined Ruhullah Khan. They spread the rumour that the Sikh army had been defeated. This news aroused the peasantry who began to plunder the Sikh troops. A great deal of Sikh property was looted including 2,000 matchlocks, 2,000 swords and other things. Both the chiefs of Rajauri and Punchh let loose their troops in harassing the Sikhs.

The Maharaja reached Punchh on 28 June, 1814, and found the town completely deserted. He was greeted by a few barking dogs. Supplies ran short. On 2 July, 1814, Raja Fatah Singh Ahluwalia and Jodh Singh Kalsia told Ranjit Singh that their troops were dying of starvation. Sukh Dayal was ordered to distribute rations of one kilogram grain among the Sikh battalions for 4 days. Sujan Rae Adalti's 4,000 troops deserted with their guns for want of grain on 5 July and fled towards Panjab.

Ruhullah Khan had ordered his people to desert their towns and villages, to remove or bury grain, to destroy other food material for men and beasts, not to offer any resistance in arms, but to attack the Sikh army on the flanks and in the rear in small bodies. This method of fighting delayed Ranjit Singh at Punchh upto 13 July, 1814.

The Maharaja advanced to Mandi, and then made his way to the

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Toshamaidan Pass on 18 July. On 29 July, Ruhullah Khan attacked him. On 30 July he assaulted the Sikhs with greater vigour. Heavy rains also caused them great annoyance.

On 5 August, 1814, Ranjit Singh entered the village Sandha. Climbing up farther he found a stream in flood through which his guns and stores could not be passed. Hence, the flow of water channel had to be diverted. At the mouth of Toshamaidan Muhammad Azim Khan had firmly entrenched to oppose the Maharaja. Ranjit Singh reconnoited the position and considered the attack too hazardous. Complete failure of supplies, heavy rains, cold, enemy guerilla attacks and the news of perilous position of Ram Dayal compelled Ranjit Singh to retreat. He despatched a body of 5,000 troops under Bhayya Ram Singh with Diwan Devi Das and Qutb-ud-din Khan Kasuriya as his deputies to reinforce Ram Dayal. To avoid the hazardous task they returned to Lahore by a different route.

During Ranjit Singh's return journey his notable commander Mit Singh Bharania was killed by enemy fire. Many men lost their lives in the retreat. Most of the luggage was either looted or it had to be left for want of transport. Ranjit Singh reached Lahore on 12 August, 1814.

Ram Dayal

Ram Dayal had a small force of about 10,000 Sikh *Ghorcharhas* or the irregular troops of jagirdars. He reached the entrance of the Bahramgala Pass on 18 June, 1814. He won over the enemy troops defending the pass with heavy bribes and crossed it on 26 June. There a strong Kashmir division checked his advance. He managed to push his way onward. In due course he passed over the Pir Panjal mountains and debouched upon the valley. There he met a fierce opposition from a strong Afghan column, which blocked his passage. It was from here that he sent fast messengers to Ranjit Singh for help in men, money and material. This news reached the Maharaja when he was retreating towards Punchh.

On 24 July, 1814, Ram Dayal descended upon Baramula. It was well-defended by Shakur Khan. In a couple of days Ram Dayal captured the town and took up an entrenched position there. On Ranjit Singh's retreat Azim Khan himself hurried to Baramula and delivered a vehement attack on the Lahore force. Ram Dayal displayed remarkable presence of mind and cool courage and repulsed the Afghans.

Diwan Amar Nath says that Diwan Ram Dayal took up an entrenched position and stuck fast to it. Nobody was allowed to leave his camp. He killed 2,000 Afghans. Muhammad Azim Khan was struck by Ram Dayal's bravery and fearlessness. He found it difficult to expel him. The local

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population hated the Afghans and secretly supported Ram Dayal. Azim Khan did not like his stay there for long. He feared that Maharaja would certainly send reinforcement and the people might revolt. He considered it advisable to make him retire at the earliest. He opened negotiations reminding him of his grandfather's friendship during his previous Kashmir expedition. He assured Ram Dayal of a safe and unmolested passage, gave him some presents for the Maharaja, and an agreement that he would remain obedient to him. Ram Dayal returned to Lahore safe and sound.

Prinsep is of the view that Azim Khan allowed Ram Dayal to return safely from the valley and through the mountains "in consideration of the friendship professed by this Governor for Diwan Mohkam Chand, its commandant's grandfather"

There seems to be no substance in this assertion. One year before on 9 July, 1813, the Diwan had inflicted a crushing defeat in the battle of Haidru near Attock on Azim Khan's brothers Wazir Fatah Khan and Dost Muhammad Khan. The Diwan could not be considered a friend of the Barakzai brothers. Besides, the Diwan was a dying man. Azim Khan's treatment was due to sheer pluck and courage of this young man of parts still in his teens, and perhaps for a favourable recompense from the future C.-in-C., as well as to the fear of reinforcements from the Maharaja.

Amar Nath says Wazir Fatah Khan was enraged on hearing of Azim Khan's nominal submission to Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja rejoiced at the prospect of having been admitted overlord of Kashmir. Azim Khan conciliated his brother.

Griffin says that "Ram Dayal, left to his own resources, behaved so gallantly that Azim Khan was compelled to come to terms with the enemy he could not annihilate, and gave him a safe conduct to the Punjab".

Ranjit Singh's Lamentation

The expedition had proved disastrous. Ranjit Singh's prestige greatly suffered. He lamented all his life for not having accepted the advice of Diwan Mohkam Chand. At a conference with Mohkam Chand and Rani Sada Kaur, the Maharaja said that several lakhs of rupees had been spent and great disgrace and insult had been suffered. He accused Bhayya Ram Singh's troops of desertion and bringing about his defeat. Afterwards, he asked Diwan Singh of Fatahgarh why he had run away from Toshamaidan Pass. He replied that Ruhullah Khan and Aghar Khan had surrounded him so closely that no water or grain could reach him and no grain had

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been left with him. Later on Ranjit Singh learnt that Azim Khan had granted Ruhullah Khan a robe of honour, a bejewelled turban and Rs. 50,000 in cash in recognition of his services. Early in 1815, the Maharaja sent a force under Ram Dayal and Hari Singh Nalwa to punish the refractory chiefs of Rajauri, Kotli, Punchh, Sarachi and Bhimbar.

On 15 September, 1814, the Maharaja told Faqir Aziz-ud-din that in the expedition to Kashmir huge sums of money had been spent. He asked the three Faqir brothers to contribute 1½ lakhs each. The Faqir, folding his hands, replied that his life and property were at the disposal of the Noble Sarkar, but that he had only Rs. 60,000 with him. The Maharaja kept quiet.

The Conquest of Kashmir, 1819

It took Ranjit Singh four years to overcome his defeat and disgrace suffered in the Kashmir expedition of 1814. In 1818 he conquered Multan province. This gave him great confidence in his generals and soldiers, and he made up his mind to conquer Kashmir.

On the death of Wazir Fatah Khan in 1818, Governor Azim Khan had left Kashmir which was entrusted to Jabbar Khan, while Azim Khan had assumed the office of the Wazir. Muhammad Azim Khan had withdrawn the best Afghan troops from Kashmir to establish himself in power in Kabul. The Afghan rule in Kashmir was most unpopular among both Hindus and Musalmans.

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Gwasha Lal Kaul writes:

Khwast Haq keh in zamin-e-mina rang,
Chun dil-e-nai shawad ba fughan rang,
Kard bar wai musallat Afghan ra
Eagh-e-Jamshed dad dahqan ra
(God willed that this enchanting land should become stinking like the smoking reed pipe with lamentation;
Placed it under the control of Afghans,
Gave away the garden of Eden to the vulgar.)

Muhammad-ud-din Fauq quotes another Kashmiri poet:

Pursidam az kharabi-e-gulshan za baghban,
Ufghan kashid-o-guft keh Afghan kharab hard.
(I asked the gardener the cause of the ruin of the garden,
He heaved a sigh and said, Afghans ruined it.)

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In April, 1819, Ranjit Singh gave liberty to Sultan Khan of Bhimbar after seven years' confinement on the understanding that he would cooperate with the Sikh army in its advance to the valley of Kashmir.

Azim Khan's younger brother Jabbar Khan hated the intellectual community of Kashmiri Pandits who had provided leadership to the oppressed people in the valley. Pandit Birbaldhar with his son Raj Kak slipped away to Jammu, and with a letter from Gulab Singh reached Lahore to persuade Maharaja Ranjit Singh to conquer Kashmir. This news leaked out to Jabbar Khan. He attacked Birbal's house. His wife committed suicide, but the young bride of Raj Kak was sent to Azim Khan at Kabul.

Ranjit Singh planned to invade Kashmir. He set up his camp at Wazirabad. Missar Diwan Chand was invested with the supreme command of the invading army numbering about twelve thousand with heavy artillery. It was divided into three parts forming one whole body. The main force was under Diwan Chand. The supporting column under Prince Kharak Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa marched behind him. The Maharaja with a reserve force was in the rear. He also took up the duty of supplying ammunition, foodstuff and transport.

Diwan Chand was accompanied by Sultan Khan of Bhimbar, but the real duty of guiding the Missar through Toshamaidan Pass all the way was assigned to Birbaldhar. Diwan Chand reached Rajauri early in June, 1819. Raja Aghar Khan fled away. The Missar destroyed the fort and plundered the town. Aghar Khan's younger brother Rahimullah Khan was installed as Raja. Aghar Khan was joined by Ruhullah Khan of Punchh. They attacked the Missar in the passes of Dhakideo and Maja. They were repulsed and the road to Pir Panjal lay open and clear. Kharak Singh marched behind him to Sardi Thana. Ranjit Singh established his camp at Bhimbar.

Missar Diwan Chand crossed the Toshamaidan Pass without any mishap over the Pir Panjal, and descended into the valley at Serae Ali on the road to Shupian. Jabbar Khan had taken up his position at Shupian. Fresh supplies of food and ammunition were constantly reaching the Missar from Ranjit Singh. The Sikh army reached Shupian on 5 July, 1819. In a sharp engagement lasting for a few hours the Afghans were repulsed.

While fording a rivulet the Sikh army was attacked again by Jabbar Khan, causing confusion among them. The Missar harangued them and they at once rallied around his banners. In a fierce fight Jabbar Khan was again defeated. He fled to Muzaffarabad, but its governor turned him

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away. He escaped to Peshawar and then to Kabul. The Sikh Army entered Srinagar on 15 July, 1819.

The Administration of Kashmir – Diwan Moti Ram, 1819-20

In 20 years from 1819 to 1839, seven governors ruled over Kashmir. The first governorship of the newly conquered province was given to Diwan Moti Ram, the only son of the celebrated Diwan Mohkam Chand and father of Ram Dayal. Diwan Mohkam Chand was the governor of the Jalandhar Doab as well as the Commaner-in-Chief of the Sikh army. As he was mostly busy in warfare, the administration of the Doab was carried on by Moti Ram. On Mohkam Chand's death in 1814 Moti Ram was confirmed in the governorship of the Jalandhar Doab. In 1819 he was transferred to Kashmir.

Some Afghans still held certain places in the valley. Moti Ram established military posts at important places and continued mopping up operations until all the Afghan pockets had been cleared. In order to devote himself exclusively to the restoration of law and order and to administer equal-handed justice to all, Moti Ram farmed out Kashmir to Birbhaldhar for 52 lakhs annually. The contract for the manufacture of shawls was given to Jawahar Mal for 10 lakhs of rupees yearly. It is for this reason that Griffin called Moti Ram 'indolent', otherwise he declared him "the best governor", who was "kind-hearted and liked by the people". He stopped cow slaughter and public *azan*, and the congregational prayers on Fridays in the Jama Masjid of Srinagar. In all other religious matters Muslims were given full freedom. Bribaldhar failed to pay the amount of the contract at the end of the first year. He was imprisoned at Lahore. In fact, the exhorbitant amount fixed was much too heavy, even more than double, the province could afford to pay. The same fate took place to his successor Pandit Ramdhar.

In 1819, Moti Ram struck in the Sringar mint Nanakshahi rupee. Kashmir was previously divided into 22 parganahs. Moti Ram reduced their number to 20. The Sikh rule was welcomed both by Hindus and Muslims. The Afghan soldiers used to seize the pretty girls for their ever-expanding harems. This cruel practice came to an end under the Sikhs. Further the terror of the Sikh name brought thefts and robbery almost to a complete stop. Moti Ram fleeced no money for himself and was incorruptible in mattes of *zan*, *zar*, *zamin*. Moti Ram had to contend with a natural calamity. Cholera took a heavy toll of the population, shortly after the occupation of Kashmir. Ranjit Singh deputed, Devi Das from Lahore to report on the condition of the country. He presented a painful picture

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of the people. Grain was scarce. The rural population was so hungry that they easily offered their children for sale. Law and order situation was despicable. Moti Ram was doing his best, but his officers lacked sympathy.

In 1820 his eldest son, Ram Dayal, hero of 1814 Kashmir expedition, was killed in Hazara at the age of about 20. Moti Ram was so heartbroken that he resigned his governorship in June, 1820, and retired to Banaras.

Hari Singh Nalwa, 1820

Hari Singh Nalwa, a brave soldier who had killed a tiger with one stroke of his sword but with the sacrifice of his horse, took charge of Kashmir in June, 1820. In those days barter system was in vogue and money was scarcely used. The Nanakshahi rupee being of high value, 16 annas, was not much liked by the people in Kashmir. They liked the previous Afghan rupee, worth ten annas. Hari Singh introduced a new silver coin of two-thirds value of Nanakshahi rupee. The new coin was called Hari Singhia rupaiya. It contained ½ tola silver and ½ tola copper. Hari Singh erected a tower at Uri to keep a watch on the lawless activities of Kakkas and Bambas of Muzaffarabad region. Their leaders were sent as hostages to Lahore.

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Hari Singh constructed gurdwaras at Kathi darwaza, Srinagar, Matan and Baramula, which were associated with the visit of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru. He removed all the restrictions imposed on Kashmiri Pandits under the Afghan rule regarding worship, dress, and some customs. The Hindus forcibly converted to Islam were allowed to return to their original religion. He abolished *Begar* meaning forcible unpaid service by villagers to government officials. He reduced the government share in the produce of saffron, and thus encouraged its cultivation. He insisted on right type of weight and measures.

Hari Singh being a military man was a strict disciplinarian and treated the people rather harshly. D.C. Sharma who examined the unpublished manuscript of William Moorcroft, traveller in Kashmir one year after Hari Singh's departure from Kashmir says that Moorcroft accused him of having collected for himself 25 lakhs of rupees. Moorcroft further stated that due to Hari Singh's extortion 4,000 shops of shawl makers were closed in 1820, and 6,000 more had decided to close in the following year. The Maharaja removed Hari Singh in December, 1820 after six months and reappointed Moti Ram to heal the wounds of the suffering people.

In those days the best road to Kashmir from Lahore was via Rawalpindi, Murree, Kohala, Muzaffarabad, Uri and Baramula to

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Srinagar. Hari Singh was coming back to Gujranwala, his hometown with his amassed treasure. The Hazara people tried to seize his loot. In a fierce engagement near Muzaffarabad, Hari Singh repulsed the enemy, killing 2,000 of them. The Trin chief head of the rebels fled into the Srikot mountains. The Maharaja was pleased with Hari Singh, and appointed him governor of Hazara in 1822.

Moti Ram's Second Governorship, 1821-26

Moti Ram assumed charge of his office in January, 1821 and held it until the middle of 1826. He prevailed upon the Maharaja to reduce the Kashmir tribute from 52 lakhs to 26 lakhs. He convinced Ranjit Singh that the people could not afford to pay more. Moti Ram checked corruption in the administration and developed agriculture and industry and trade both internal and external. A tax was imposed on courtesans. They were visited by foreign traders and Sikh soldiery. The income from this tax to the State in 1823 was Rs. 8,000.

Dhian Singh Prime Minister was opposed to the existence of other powerful families at the Lahore Durbar. He wanted to have his own creatures in all the key positions in the state. He poisoned the ears of the Maharaja against Moti Ram who was dismissed in June, 1826. To console him the Maharaja made Moti Ram a member of the mission to Shimla in 1827.

The famous traveller Moorcroft visited Kashmir during Moti Ram's first governorship, and then stayed in Ladakh for about one year and a half. He wrote a detailed account about Kashmir. He says that Moti Ram divided Kashmir into twenty districts, each under a collector. There were nearly 4000 villages and thus each district consisted of about 200 villages. The total revenues amounted to 36 lakhs of Afghan rupees or 22½ lakhs of Nanakshahi rupees. Land tax and duty on saffron fetched 12 lakhs, and income from shawl manufacture and merchandise brought in 24 lakhs. Ranjit Singh approximately insisted on getting 25 lakhs Nanakshahi rupees from Kashmir.

The Sikh army numbered 3,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry. The Afghan governors maintained a force between 16,000 and 20,000.

Chuni Lal, 1826-27

Chuni Lal serving under Dhian Singh and a pliant tool of the Prime Minister was appointed Governor of Kashmir. The real object was to bring Kashmir under the direction of Jammu. The Maharaja either did not understand this game or he was determined to keep the Jammu

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brothers on top. Chuni Lal was a man of no significance. His administration for one year and a half proved barren. In a case of cow slaughter the guilty persons were hanged and their bodies were dragged through the main bazars of Srinagar. This created great commotion, and he was recalled in November, 1827.

Diwan Kirpa Ram, 1827-31

In December, 1827, Ranjit Singh appointed Moti Ram's second son, Diwan Kirpa Ram, governor of Kashmir. He was required to pay 26 lakhs of rupees in cash, and pashmina and shawls worth 14 lakhs annually. Earlier he had held charge of Hazara and the Jalandhar Doab. According to Griffin both father and son were the best governors of Kashmir. He like his father and grandfather was very honest and incorruptible. He constructed at Srinagar many fine buildings and lovely gardens.

During his governorship the great earthquake of 1828 took place and a large number of buildings and houses collapsed. It was followed by the Cholera epidemic. Further the Bambas and Kakkas rose in rebellion at the instigation of Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi.

In January, 1831, Raja Faiztalab Khan of Bhimbar, was expelled from his state by Raja Dhian Singh. Ranjit Singh never liked to receive a complaint against his Prime Minister. Faiztalab took shelter with Kirpa Ram at Srinagar. Dhian Singh persuaded the Maharaja to dismiss Kirpa Ram for his defiance. The Maharaja imprisoned him at Lahore. The leading nobles of the Lahore Durbar held a conference on 22 February, 1831. In a deputation they pleaded before the Maharaja for the release of Kirpa Ram. They said if honest and able officers were punished like this, the entire atmosphere at the court would become corrupt. The Maharaja set him free on realizing a fine of 9 lakhs of rupees for disobeying his Prime Minister. Kirpa Ram felt disgusted and applied for permission to join his father at Banaras. The request was turned down.

Kripa Ram then sought permission to visit Jawalamukhi. It was granted. To console him the Maharaja granted him the jagir of Kunjah worth 3 lakhs annually on 14 December, 1831. This was a princely offer. But Kirpa Ram could not forget his imprisonment like an ordinary criminal. He spurned at it. From Jawalamukhi the Diwan crossed into British territory and never returned to the Panjab. Thus Dhian Singh admirably succeeded in eliminating one great and influential family at the Court. Griffin rightly observes:

> This absolute selfishness of Ranjit Singh, and the shameful manner in which he ignored faithful service were the most unpleasant feature in

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his character. Diwan Mohkam Chand, the founder of the Diwan family, was his best and most successful general, and it was in great measure owing to his military ability, that the Maharaja established himself as sole ruler of the Punjab. But this did not save his son Moti Ram or his grandson Kirpa Ram from constant slights, fines, confiscation and eventual ruin.

Bhama Singh Ardali, 1831

The Maharaja considered Kashmir a castrated province which could be entrusted to the care of any man to be looked after. This time his choice for the office of the governor of Kashmir fell on his *ardali*, or a personal peon of the lowest grade. Bhama Singh Ardali took charge of Kashmir in January, 1831. On 28 February, 1831, Bhayya Ram Singh told the Maharaja that the province of Kashmir was plunging downwards, and the inhabitants were leaving for British territory. In his time Sunni-Shia riots broke out. Bhama Singh completely failed to check them. They caused enormous loss of life and property. About 300 Irani Shia merchants who had permanently settled in the valley emigrated to their homeland. Bhama Singh was recalled in November, 1831.

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Prince Sher Singh, 1831-34

Like a panther's spring the Maharaja suddenly jumped from a peon to a prince with no better fate for Kashmirians. One had not known how to command. The other did not know how to spare time from self-indulgence. One was a low class wretched; the other was a high class moral wreck. On 14 November, 1831 Prince Sher Singh was appointed Governor of Kashmir. On 6 December, 1831, his salary was fixed at Rs.10,000 per mensem. The Maharaja knew of the Prince's life-style of luxurious living. He thought the Prince would not be able to pay revenues in a lump sum. Hence he was ordered to remit 2 lakhs of rupees every month. Following the hill route Sher Singh arrived at Baramula. From Baramula to Srinagar he travelled by boat in the river Jehlam. The surface of water was half frozen. Hundreds of boatmen sailed ahead of him cutting ice and clearing the passage.

Ranjit Singh's main objective from Kashmir was to get money, shawls, saffron and pretty dancing girls. Wasakha Singh was sent to help the Prince in the realization of revenues. As expected Prince Sher Singh found himself in God Indra's court and completely forgot the mundane duties. Wasakha Singh became absolute ruler. He forcibly collected from kardars and traders a sum of Rs. 7,26,000 for himself, and remitted

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another sum of two lakhs to the Lahore treasury. Ranjit Singh's intelligence department was quite effective. The Maharaja recalled Wasakha Singh in chains to Lahore and realised a fine of five lakh rupees from him, and appointed a trio – two Sikhs and one Musalman, believing in the policy of check and balance. They were Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh and Shaikh Ghulam Muhai-ud-din. They came to an understanding to share the loot in common. Jamadar was later on censured, while Ghulam Muhai-ud-din's property was confiscated. The Kotwal of Srinagar was not paid any salary – "the Sikhs instead of paying, used to extract Rs. 30,000 from him".

Sher Singh's Diplomacy

Sher Singh was a great diplomat. He was a genuine son of Ranjit Singh and the Maharaja knew it. The Prince had won his father's goodwill by killing Sayyid Ahmad Wahabi. He was on the best of terms with the Ludhiana office. He was a favourite of the Sikh army. The Jammu brothers were to be won over to achieve success in the impending struggle for the throne after the death of the greate Maharaja. He supported them in establishing their control over south-western Kashmir and Ladakh. Ladakh was annexed by Gulab Singh with the tacit approval of Sher Singh and without informing Ranjit Singh. Sher Singh without Maharaja's permission transferred Kashmir districts of Banihal and Muruwardwan to Jammu province under Raja Gulab Singh. They were reverted back to Kashmir by Ranjit Singh.

Conquest of South-West Kashmir Hills, 1832

A number of hill tribes occupied the north-western regions of Panjab watered by River Jehlam to the south of Kashmir. They were Dhund, Sudhan, Sathi and Murdial. The Dhund or Dhanda tribe lived on both sides of River Jehlam, but chiefly along the right bank starting from the Kakka-Bamba hills down the river upto a point nearly 50 km. They numbered between 50 and 60 thousand. The Sudhans were Sud Hindus and had been converted to Islam during Aurangzeb's reign. They dwelt on the left bank of River Jehlam opposite Dhunds and their number was about 40,000 souls. The Sathi tribe consisted of Seth Khatris who had embraced Islam during Aurangzeb's reign. They inhabited the lower ranges of the hills to the south of Dhunds and Sudhans. Their population was approximately 20,000. The Murdial tribe inhabited the area lying to the east of the Sudhans, and their number was estimated at about 18,000.

About the year 1832, the Jammu Rajas made up their minds to

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conquer these converted tribes. Their aim was to extend the limits of the Jammu province, and to surround the Kashmir valley on all sides by their territory. At their suggestion and approval of Sher Singh the Maharaja marched from Lahore at the head of an army of 60,000 with 150 guns and encamped at Kuri, a place situated at the foot of the hills occupied by the above mentioned tribes. The presence of the great Maharaja and the thunder of 150 cannon echoing through the hilly regions frightened the tribes, and they quietly submitted without any fighting. The country was handed over to Dhian Singh by the Maharaja. The headman of the Sudhan tribe, Shams Khan, was taken as a hostage, and he served Raja Dhian Singh as a *Ghorcharha* trooper.

Kakka-Bamba Tribes

The Kakka-Bamba tribes lived along the river Jehlam in the south-western Kashmir. Their country lay adjacent to Hazara. They were refractory people, and always formed a source of trouble to the rulers of Kashmir. Their leaders were generally detained as hostages. Diwan Mohkam Chand conquered them in 1811, and annexed their territory to Ranjit Singh's kingdom. This country was farmed out to Sahib Singh Bedi. In order to make these people peaceful inhabitants of the Sikh kingdom, the Bedi hanged their holy man, a faqir who was held in high esteem by these two tribes.

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In 1833 a serious famine broke out in Kashmir. A large number of people died of starvation. Many migrated to Panjab and British India. D.C. Sharma says that Srinagar lost two-thirds of its population by death and desertion.

The Maharaja sent large quantities of grain laden on thousands of donkeys. In villages grain was distributed through mosques and temples. In big towns and cities of Kashmir, the troops collected people in open spaces in rows and each was given two kg of grain daily for their families.

The Maharaja deputed Jamadar Khushhal Singh to help Sher Singh in administration. The Jamadar was a greedy and corrupt official. In August, 1833, Captain Wade told Ranjit Singh that Khushhal Singh was ruining Kashmir. On 7 September, 1833, to the great delight of the Maharaja Khushhal Singh presented him with 3 lakhs of rupees and pashmina worth 5 lakhs of rupees.

Colonel Mihan Singh, 1834-41

On 14 February, 1832, Mohan Lal recorded in his diary: "Mihan Singh is the bravest commander in Ranjit Singh's army, and has fought a great

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many battles, in which he has received wounds." He further says that Mihan Singh had built a fort for himself near Gujranwala. It was a mud fort about 40 feet high. It was situated in a garden containing fruit trees and flowers.

Colonel Mihan Singh took charge of his new post in October, 1834. On 24 November, 1834, he reported that "on account of the inattention of the Maharaja, Kashmir had become absolutely deserted, and its affairs had gone from bad to worse".

The Maharaja abolished duties on grain and other necessary articles of daily consumption. Mihan Singh imported large quantities of grain and poultry from the Panjab. Black marketeers were severely punished. To encourage cultivation he gave relief in land revenue, and granted *taqavi* loans liberally to cultivators. He promoted trade by reducing tariff duties. Shawl factory owners were given loans to increase production. Imports and exports with Ladakh, Panjab, British India, Afghanistan and Central Asia were developed. Serais were built at convenient places for traders and travellers. Facilities of credit and correspondence through state postal service were provided.

The greatest industry in Srinagar was that of shawl making. It depended on shawl wool which came from Tibet and Yarqand via Ladakh. After his conquest of Ladakh, Raja Gulab Singh diverted the supply of this wool to Jammu, and the British Government through Rampur-Bushahar and Shimla to Delhi. Mihan Singh checked Gulab Singh, and the old route through Kashmir continued. The shawl weavers and shawl merchants were Shias, and as a result of Shia-Sunni riots, the Shias were leaving the valley for Amritsar.

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Vigne says that Mihan Singh suppressed an organized body of thugs called Galwans. They roamed about, committed dacoities, and carried off beautiful girls. Khaira Galwan was their leader. Mihan Singh rooted them out. Following the example of Great Mughals he laid out Basant Bagh and planted fine chinar trees which still exist in that garden. The tribal revolts were crushed with a strong hand.

In July, 1835, Mihan Singh decided to perform the marriage of his son Sant Singh. He sent one lakh of rupees and many costly suits of clothes to his own fort in Gujranwala district situated on the highway. The Maharaja ordered him to postpone the marriage and send the money to him. In October, 1835, Mihan Singh sent to Lahore treasury one lakh of rupees and two bundles of pashmina. The Maharaja demanded 26 lakhs of the contract.

On 4 February, 1836, the revenues of Kashmir were declared to

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amount to 25 lakhs as follows:

18 lakhs from shawls. It was entirely realized in kind.

3½ lakhs from Shaldagh.

3½ lakhs from boats.

Beautiful Kashmiri girls were received in tribute by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Hugel's Observations about Mihan Singh and the Sikh Rule

The celebrated German traveller Baron Charles Hugel passed right across Kashmir in 1835-36. He was a very keen observer of men and matters. Besides in political affairs his attitude was absolutely impartial. His observations about Mihan Singh and Sikh rule are interesting.

Mihan Singh, His Person and Habits

Mihan Singh had thickest unwieldy figure. He was still in the prime of life, but his dissolute way of living had given him the appearance of an old man. His hair was white as silver. By his appearance he appeared good-natured and kind. He wore a long and unclipped beard. He had thick lips and half-opened eyes. He was wrapped in a yellow silk robe. His head dress consisted of a simple white handkerchief. He was accustomed to drink two bottles of Kashmiri spirits at noon daily. He was not so tipsy at Hugel's first interview, but most assuredly was not sober.

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His Court

Mihan Singh held his court in his palace called Shergarh, but the Sikhs called it Narsinghgarh. The main entrance to the palace was by a broad flight of wooden steps outside. The whole way was lined with troops. They were received in an open pavilion on the terrace. Mihan Singh was seated in an armchair. The number of his attendants was considerable. In an outer circle stood his bodyguards. They were richly dressed in red and gold with red silk sashes. They wore black heron's plume called kalga in their turbans.

Mihan Singh came forward to receive Hugel and conducted him to the place fixed for him. On the ground to his right sat many of the Muslim Rajas from Baramula and Muzaffarabad mountains, tributaries to Ranjit Singh. One of every family was detained as a hostage in Kashmir. From time to time they were obliged to bring large gifts to the Governor, otherwise their tribute was raised. Their eyes sparkled with indignation, at the degradation of sitting at their feet, particularly when Mihan Singh pointed out each one to Hugel by name. He took leave with an embrace.

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The Sikh Troops

The Sikh garrison of the valley consisted of two regiments of infantry of some 12 or 14 hundred men. Hugel witnessed a dance attended by Sikh troops. The scene is thus described by Hugel: Just before it was dark, a number of Kashmirian beauties made their appearance. There was one among the dancers whose animated cast of features made her much more prepossessing than the rest. The passion of the Sikhs for this amusement was so great that Hugel's chief pleasure was really derived from looking at them, and he believed there was much truth in the proverb, that one could take away the wife and child of a Sikh while he was listening to the adventures of Rustam and Sohrab, and he would not be sorry. There soldiers shot Mihan Singh dead in 1841.

Justice

The people seemed contented with the justice dealt out to them, and admitted to Hugel that no more than one guilty person in every twenty was ever punished for his crimes. The people seldom reported to the Sikh police. The dreadful cruelties perpetrated by their earlier rulers, who, for the smallest offence, punished them with the loss of their noses or ears, made the poor people well satisfied with their present comparatively mild government; and in truth, there was very little oppression on the part of the governors or police officers.

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Hugel was walking on foot near Pampur on 23 November 1835. He saw a Kashmiri driving another Kashmiri before him. He was beaten off and on. On inquiry he was told that the man had stolen his goods. Just then some Sikh soldiers overtook them. The effect was instantaneous. The culprit was immediately let off. Hugel was told that a Kashmirian would put up with any wrong rather than seek redress from his Sikh masters, as he was invariably obliged to pay the judge a high price for his decision, without the slightest prospect of recovering his lost property.

The country was so completely subjugated that the natives, except a few traders in shawls, were nothing better than so many beggars. The Maharaja demanded from Mihan Singh a tribute of 22½ lakhs a year from Kashmir, which, as Hugel very well knew could not be raised in the country.

Comment

Under Afghan rule the people of Kashmir, both Hindus and Muslims, particularly Shias had suffered dreadfully. The Sikh rule on the whole was mild. They did not intefere with their personal and private life. The

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Maharaja was very strict in realizing tribute from every province under him. Kashmir was no exception to this rule. Some of Ranjit Singh's governors were extremely selfish, greedy and corrupt. His intelligence department was efficient. On their reports the guilty officers were immediately recalled to Lahore and were punished. Unfortunately Nature also put obstacles in the way of Sikh Government. Kashmir suffered frequently from famines, floods, pestilences and earthquakes. Extreme poverty compelled many parents to part with their little daughters who were expected to grow into charming maidens. The agents from Panjab and Delhi were roaming about all over the country in search of such girls who were below eight years of age. They offered from Rs. 15 to Rs. 150 for each child.

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CHAPTER 9

Hazara

Hazara is a land of a thousand hills,
Its people fight the foe, the country kills;
Yusafzai Pathans inhabit the land,
Sayyids and Mullahs carry the wand.

The Country

Hazara lies at the foot of the Himalayas in the north-west corner of the Panjab. It consists of a tract both plain and mountainous. The plain is in the west and south, while the mountains are in the east and the north. The whole territory is bounded on the north by the Hindukush range of mountains, in the south by the Kabul river, on the west by the Uttamkhail mountains, and in the east by the solemn and severe Indus, except Dhamtaur valley which lies across the river. This land embraces the valleys of five rivers, Panjkora, Dir, Swat, Buner and Chamla.

The upper parts of the Panjkora are mountainous and thinly peopled, but the lower part of the valley is fertile and highly cultivated. The Dir valley lies 100 km from Chitral, and its altitude is 5,650 feet. It is a hilly country. The Khan of Dir derived most of his revenues from the export of timber which was floated down the Panjkora and Swat rivers. Swat is a green and fertile valley. It stretches to the south of Chitral along both the banks of the Swat river. Buner is situated adjacent to Swat. It is composed of a number of little valleys, all opening on the Buner also called Barandu river which joins the Indus near Darband. It is noted for the production of a small grain called Rangani. Chamla extends from the lower Swat to the Indus and is bounded on the north by the low range of the hills of Buner. It is a broad valley.

The villages are numerous and large in the plain. Some of them had

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two or three thousand houses, and presented an appearance of ease and comfort about them. In the whole area lying between Karachi and Kashmir, no other tract of land possessed magnificent mountains, numerous streams and rivulets, breathtaking scenery and awe inspiring Indus. Cultivation covered every bit of plain land, fully irrigated. Great wealth of water and wood, green grass and fragrant flowers, rich fields and prosperous villages, under the care of mighty mountains were the fascinating features of Hazara.

Dhamtaur is a narrow valley, 204 square miles. It consists of high mountains covered with oak, pine, walnut, wild olive and other hill trees. The tract is called Tanawal. It lies to the east of the Indus, a little above Attock, and contains seven Tappas. The valley of Hazara occupies the territories of Mansehra, Haripur and Upper Tanawal. The total area is 3,062 square miles.

The People

The Pathans are the dominant people throughout the whole tract west of the Indus as far south as the southern borders of Derah Ismail Khan district. To the east of the Indus they hold Chach country in Hazara and Rawalpindi districts. The Pathan colonies exist along the left bank of River Indus till it finally leaves the Salt Range. They inhabit the northern parts of Bhakkar Thal. They had strong colonies at Multan, Kasur, Malerkotla and Kunjpura. Among all the Pathans the most powerful were Yusafzais, Afridis and Waziris. The Yusafzais occupy both the banks of the Indus.

The Pathans in Ranjit Singh's time were notorious robbers and thieves, adept in night attacks. Once they harboured a grudge against a person, they never forgot it in their lifetime. Overpowered by anger, they knew nothing about forgiveness and tolerance. They were exceedingly proud. They considered Hindus and Sikhs as their national foes. No oath and no promises bound them to an engagement. They were capital horsemen and owned good horses. They made excellent soldiers. They were first rate skirmishers and excellent marksmen. They attacked their enemy from behind.

The Pathans had their own code of honour. It was called Pakhtunwali. This was strictly adhered to by them. It imposed upon them three obligations:

(a) *Nanawatai* (right of asylum). The Pathans gave shelter even to an enemy who came as a supplicant.

(b) *Badal* (spirit of revenge). They took revenge on an enemy for the

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wrong done to them when an opportunity came, even after many years To take revenge was considered a sacred duty.

(c) *Melmastia* (open-handed hospitality). They provided shelter, food and clothes to a person as long as he stayed with them. But when he left their protection and was out of their limits, he was murdered either for revenge or for his riches, may be a rupee or even a few annas.

Hazara is inhabited by Yusafzai Pathans, who possess indomitable spirit to defend their country and their freedom. To preserve their honour and faith nothing can prevent them from ferocity and alacrity. The Yusafzais are divided into seven tribes, and each tribe into numerous clans and subsections. The tribe, clan and section are distinguished by the suffix of Zai or Khail. Zai is a Pashto word meaning son. Khail is an Arabic word meaning son or association. The Yusafzais in the mountains called Kohistan were dominated by Sayyids, the descendants of Pir Baba, a celebrated saint living in the days of Humayun. They had no chief of great importance.

The plain country situated below the hills was called Sama. It was a level land peopled by the great branch of Yusafzais called Mundur. Their most powerful leader was Fatah Khan of Panjtar village. Another important leader was Painda Khan of Darband. A minor chief was Arsila Khan of Zaidah. The Yusafzais of the hills and plains were closely connected by ties of blood, clanship and religion.

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As regards the temper and disposition of Yusafzais, Shahamat Ali in 1838 noted that they were "warlike and independent: exceedingly rude and ignorant". Davies remarked that though they were very hospitable, patriotic and proud, yet they were extremely priest-ridden, and were easily led by Sayyids and religious fanatics. Their virtues and vices were great. In the high mountains they were remarkably sober and free from vices. In the lower parts they committed all sorts of sexual sins and crimes. Elphinstone was of the view that they were suspicious and irritable.

They were indeed as rugged as their mountains and as turbulent as their rivers, a tough and formidable lot, difficult to conquer and dangerous to keep, the most fanatical people overflowing with religious zeal and bigotry. They were extremely strict in their national prejudices. They married their daughters only in their own clan and with pecuniary interest. In matters religious the Yusafzais were controlled by the Mullas in the plains and by the Sayyids in the hills. The Mullas were dreaded because of their numbers, unanimity and learning. The Sayyids were treated as if they were next to God. Shahamat Ali wrote: "Troops alone

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could keep them within their limits or otherwise they would infest the roads night and day". On account of mutual jealousy and rivalry they were a disunited people.

Military Strength

The whole tribe was in arms. Hardly a day passed when the *naqara* (kettledrum) did not turn the inhabitants from their fields to the village. It was believed that the whole tribe could gather one lakh of fighting men. Their cavalry was insignifcant and their strength lay in infantry. They were armed with heavy matchlocks and long spears. Both were used with singular dexterity. Some had bows and arrows of a formidable size. A few wore chain armour. They displayed excellent swordmanship.

Whenever the sound of kettledrum was heard at any hour of the day or night, every man able to bear arms rushed to a *hujra*, a public meeting room in his neighbourhood. There were 8 to 20 *hujras* in every village. From there they proceeded in small batches under separate flags and Mullas to the scene of action without any discipline or order or head to lead them. Each party or *hujra* acted independently. They won over an undisciplined enemy force due to their numbers, courage, alertness and skill in the use of arms. But a disciplined cavalry easily routed them and destroyed them totally. Ferocious, fanatical and freedom loving as they were, they never surrendered or compromised.

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Hatred of the Yusafzais for the Sikhs

The hatred of the Yusafzais for the Sikhs was such as could not be described in words. It was considered lawful and meritorious to plunder, torture or kill them. No oath made with a Sikh was respected. For them the best means to earn their livelihood was to attack the Sikhs, to plunder their property, to torture them to the utmost and then put them to death in the most cruel manner.

Ranjit Singh's Objective

Ranjit Singh turned his attention to Hazara after his acquisition of the fort of Attock in 1813. It was difficult in fact to retain possession of Attock without the occupation of Hazara. As a source of revenue the Yusafzai country had absolutely no importance. Later on when the Sikh rule had been firmly established there, they never collected more than Rs. 50,000 in the year and that much at the head of a strong force going from village to village. Its preservation as a part of the Sikh kingdom cost the Maharajá not less than 5 lakhs on an average annually involving

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death of some of his most prominent generals, a large number of troops and hundreds of peaceful Hindu shopkeepers and others.

But the tract could not be left unconquered on account of its strategic value. It was situated on the highroad leading from Afghanistan to Kashmir which could be conquered by securing this road. Further Ranjit Singh's main aim was to close the Khaibar Pass which had served as the gateway to India during the past two thousand years. Besides, he had to protect his fort of Attock from the attacks of Yusafzais and Khataks who were ever ready to plunder the Sikh lands. Hence, the subjugation of Hazara or the Yusafzai country was imperative for Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh's Peaceful Attempts

Ranjit Singh always tried to win over an enemy by peaceful means first of all. He resorted to warfare after making all possible attempts at pacification. The great leader of Yusafzais was Fatah Khan of Panjtar. Ranjit Singh opened negotiations with him. Panjtar was a cluster of five small villages, containing about 500 houses. Panjtar was not a fortified place and the road leading to it was level and fit for the use of guns. Fatah Khan had about 60 paid followers each of whom was given three rupees per mensem. He had four guns fixed in the Shahdara Pass leading into the territory of Swat and Buner. He commanded about 1,500 foot and 200 horse. They were called *ulusi*.

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Ranjit Singh offered Fatah Khan a jagir of three lakhs and the rank of Khan of all Yusafzais if he would only acknowledge the Maharaja as his suzerain by sending a hawk or a horse. Fatah Khan's head was as high as his tone was challenging. He replied: "Horses and hawks are found with rich nobles at the courts of kings. I am a poor zamindar having nothing of the kind, but I can send you a fat cow if your please". He took an oath on the holy *Quran* to kill every Hindu and Sikh on whom he could lay his hands, and destroy their abodes and temples. He never submitted until his death in 1840.

Having failed to conciliate the most powerful Yusafzai chief, Ranjit Singh turned to the next important leader Paindah Khan of Darband. Darband was situated in Tanawal to the east of River Indus, in a small valley, allowing a narrow passage to it. Hence, its very name implied closed door. Fearing the Sikh aggression, he established himself at Amb just opposite Darband on the western bank of the Indus. It was so called from a solitary mango tree whose delicious fruit was received later on by Ranjit Singh in tribute. This village was situated on a small piece of land, a few hundred metres square, enclosed between the deep and rapid Indus

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and the rugged and lofty chains of hills overhanging the river. Paindah Khan maintained a body of 1,000 paid soldiers and 3 or 4 thousand men of his tribe followed him. He had been in rebellion against Ranjit Singh since the latter captured Attock in 1813. He seized Hindus and Sikhs and extorted ransom. If money was not received in time, he flung them into the Indus after tying stones round their necks. No oaths or ties bound him. He was as sly as a fox and as ferocious as a tiger. He crossed the Indus on inflated skins under the very eyes of Sikh garrisons to plunder Hindus and Sikhs. His main targets were Pakhli, Dhamtaur, Chach, Hazara and Naushahra. He was afraid only of Hari Singh Nalwa. Since his death in 1837, he became more daring. After Ranjit Singh's death his lawless activities greatly increased. When asked by Edward Conolly in 1840 about his hunting ground, Paindah Khan replied that his *shikargah* was across river Indus and his game were the Sikhs. He died in 1844.

Ranjit Singh was not dismayed. He continued his exertions, and eventually succeeded in winning the allegiance of Arsila Khan of Zaidah. He was the most powerful among minor chiefs. Fatah Khan of Panjtar hated him, and he was forced to save himself from ruin by seeking the protection of the Sikhs. He had a large number of horses. He collected revenues for the Sikhs, and was in turn helped in plundering his neighbours. He was noted for good sense and liberality of disposition. He remained loyal to the Lahore Durbar till his death in 1843.

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The Sikh Forts

Ranjit Singh had to build a chain of forts to station strong garrisons in them in order to maintain his authority and to ensure peace in Hazara and its neighbourhood. The majority of these forts were built of mud. The following forts have been traced from various sources:

1. *Akora*. It was the chief village of the northern Khataks, 25 km from Naushahra, 18 km from Attock, one km from the right bank of the Kabul river. This was built by Lahna Singh Sandhanwalia.

2. *Bala Hisar*. The famous Bala Hisar fort at Peshawar was in ruins. It was rebuilt by the Sikhs.

3. *Bara*. The Bara fort was built by Mangal Singh Ramgarhia on the bank of Bara river. Its water was so delicious that it was daily brought to Peshawar in large vessels for Sikh troops. Rice grown on its banks was highly valued for its size and fragrance. The whole crop was brought to Peshawar. The best grain was reserved for seed. The next best was sent to Lahore for the Maharaja and his guests. The rest was given to zamindars.

4. *Burj-e-Hari Singh*. It was a small fort 7 km from Peshawar on the left

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side of the road.

5. *Darband fort*. It was occasionally used as a starting point for frontier expeditions.

6. *Darma*

7. *Dursna*

8. *Fatahgarh*. The Fatahgarh fort was situated 16 km west of Peshawar near the entrance of the Khaibar Pass close to Jamrud. It was built by Hari Singh Nalwa. It stood on a 100-feet-high ground. Hari Singh's tomb was also in this fort.

9. *Gandgarh*. The fort of Gandgarh stood among the hills running south of Torbela parallel to the Indus.

10. *Harkishangarh*. It was the principal Sikh fort in Hazara. It stood in the centre of the plain. Around this fort people began to settle. In due course it developed into a town named after Nalwa as Haripur Hazara. It is situated 32 km from Hasan Abdal. This place served as the Sikh headquarters whenever the Yusafzais revolted.

11. *Jahangira*. This fort lay on the left bank of the Kabul river, 5 km from Akora. There was a ferry on the main road to the Yusafzai country. It was the seat of Sikh administration for the Yusafzai region.

12. *Khairabad*. This fort was situated on the right bank of the Indus, opposite Attock. It was built by Prince Kharak Singh.

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13. *Kron*

14. *Machin*

15. *Mansehra*. Hari Singh Nalwa built a fort at Mansehra, the famous place for Ashoka's rock edict.

16. *Matu*

17. *Nara*. At this place General Ram Dayal was killed in an ambush in 1820. A fort was erected there later on.

18. *Narrai*

19. *Naushahra*. It is situated on the left bank of the Lundi or Kabul river, 30 km from Attock and 42 km from Peshawar. The fort lay in Naushahra Khurd on the Grand Trunk Road, 3 km from the British Naushahra cantonment towards Peshawar.

20. *Serai Salah*

21. *Shabqadar*. This fort was located in Charsadda area 28 km north-west of Peshawar. It commanded the Gandab road. It was constructed by Lahna Singh Sandhanwalia under the supervision of Tota Ram. It was called Shankargarh after the name of the latter's son who was born during its construction.

22. *Sikham*

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23. *Sitana*. It lay at the foot of Mahaban hills on the western bank of River Indus.

24. *Srikot*. Hari Singh Nalwa erected a fort there after killing its chief in 1825.

25. *Torbela*. This fort stood on the Darband-Haripur road 32 km from the former and 35 km from the latter.

The garrisons in these forts were to serve in an emergency. The real power was exercised by civil officers. Ranjit Singh appointed some of his best soldier-administrators in this turbulent region, and many of them laid down their lives while performing their duty.

The Sikh Governors

1. *Hukma Singh Chimni, 1814-19*

Hukma Singh Chimni was the first Governor of Hazara. He held this office from 1814 to 1819, with his headquarters at Attock to begin with. From there he was to occupy Hazara slowly and gradually. Hukma Singh appointed his own officers to assist him in the seizure of this turbulent land.

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(1) The Hazara territory north-east of Hasan Abdal was entrusted to Lahna Singh Sandhanwalia. He followed a peaceful policy. (2) The Khatak region on the right bank of River Indus was managed by Mahu Singh. (3) The district of Akora west of the Indus to the north of the Khatak tract along the bank of the river was assigned to Budh Singh Sandhanwalia, who selected Piara Mal as his deputy.

Hukma Singh was a ruthless administrator. He publicly hanged a great Yusafzai leader, Sayyid Khan, in 1819. The whole country of Hazara rose in revolt against the Sikhs under Sher Zaman Khan. The Maharaja recalled him.

2. *Diwan Ram Dayal, 1819-20*

Ram Dayal son of Diwan Moti Ram and grandson of Diwan Mohkam Chand, a young man of about 19 years of age succeeded Chimni. He was a rising star, true copy of his illustrious grandfather. He possessed all the qualities of a successful general and administrator. Ranjit Singh had in his mind to appoint him Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh army after Missar Diwan Chand. But his unbridled rashness and overconfidence of the youth was against him. He had hardly ruled over Hazara for a few months when Yusafzais gathered in thousands at Gandgarh. A large body of Yusafzais created disturbances at Nara. Ram Dayal reached the place

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in the evening and took up an entrenched position. The battle began at sunrise the next day and lasted the whole day. At sunset the Yusafzais retired to their places of rest in small batches. Ram Dayal allowed his men to go to their trenches. He was the last to leave the field with a small escort. A party of Yusafzais lay hidden near the field to search for articles from the dead bodies of both sides to take home as a prize. Finding Ram Dayal separated from the main body of the Sikhs they fell upon him and shot down everybody. At the loss of this young man of parts, Ranjit Singh's grief was unbounded, while his father Moti Ram lost all interest in life, resigned his office of the governorship of Kashmir, and retired to Banaras in search of peace of mind.

3. *Amar Singh Majithia or Kalan, 1820-22*

Amar Singh Majithia was the next governor from 1820 to 1822. He was such a strong and sturdy fellow that his arrow had passed through the trunk of a tree in Yusafzai country. Muhammad Khan Tarin, a notable chief, revolted. He was supported by the lawless tribes of Dhund, Tarin and Tanawal. Amar Singh inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. After the battle, he went to a nearby stream accompanied by a few Sikh body-guards, to drink water and bathe. Taking off his clothes he jumped into the water. A body of Yusafzais lay concealed nearby. They instantly rushed and killed everybody. His dead body was recovered after a month. Thus another brave young man fell a victim to the impudence of youth. The Yusafzais preserved the tree as a symbol of man's strength.

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4. *Hari Singh Nalwa, 1822-1837*

Hari Singh Nalwa was destined to enjoy a long lease of governorship from 1822 to 1837. He was a terror incarnate. The Pathan mothers used to frighten their naughty children with his name saying, '*Harya raghle da*' meaning Harya was coming. Hari Singh was a man of great dash and daring. He was a hero for his troops, ever ready to meet any situation successfully, encountering heavy odds fearlessly. The Yusafzais had found in him more than their equal. His formula was a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye.

The Battle of Tihri or Naushahra, 14 March, 1823: The Sayyids and Mullas incited the Yusafzais to expel the Sikhs from their country bag and baggage. The tribal leaders decided to fight a determined battle against the Sikhs. They were supported by Azim Khan, Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Azim Khan was displeased with his brother Yar Muhammad Khan, Governor of Peshawar, for his submission to Ranjit Singh. He

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declared a holy war against the Sikhs. Hence, Kabul-Peshawar-Hazara got ready to fight to a finish.

Ranjit Singh rushed from Lahore at the head of a strong army and heavy artillery. He crossed the Indus on 13 March, 1823, and advanced to Naushahra. Jai Singh Atariwala who had gone over to Dost Muhammad Khan, sought Maharaja's pardon and joined him.

The Yusafzais and Khataks took up their position at Tihri on the left bank of the Kabul river, 2 km from Naushahra towards Peshawar on 14 March, 1823. Azim Khan at the head of a strong force encamped on the right bank of the Kabul river a few km from Tihri. His brothers Jabbar Khan and Dost Muhammad Khan organized the tribals and assumed the duty of leading them.

Ranjit Singh divided his army into two parts. One division under him, Missar Diwan Chand, Balbhadra Singh Gorkha and Akali Phula Singh, took up their position against Yusafzais and Khataks. The other half under Hari Singh Nalwa, Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Sher Singh, Budh Singh Sandhanwalia and General Ventura engaged themselves against Azim Khan with the object to prevent his crossing the river and joining the Ghazis. Azim Khan was kept tied down to his camp and he could not come to help his Ghazis.

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Heavy bombardment forced the tribals to leave the mound. No sooner did they come down than Akali Phula Singh led the attack. The Ghazis were cut off like grass. They were given no quarter. They were driven back three times by Ranjit Singh himself. Leaving 3,000 men dead and wounded in the battlefield they slipped away to their homes. The Sikhs also suffered heavily. Their two notable commanders, Akali Phula Singh and General Balbhadra Singh Gorkha, with about 2,000 men lost their lives. Azim Khan was so much frightened that leaving his guns, tents and other equippage, fled to Peshawar and then to Kabul, a most dejected and broken-hearted man and died a month and a half aftewards of shame and disgrace. The mound on Naushahra-Mardan road marks the site of this battle. A gurdwara and a tomb were erected in honour and memory of Akali Phula Singh.

This battle established the Sikh supremacy to the west of the Indus as the battle of Haidru had done in 1813 to the east of that river. Griffin writes:

> It was a critical contest, and decided once for all, whether Sikhs or Afghans should rule east of the Khyber and the mountains of the North-West frontier.

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Sarbuland Khan Defeated: In January, 1824, Sarbuland Khan, chief of Tanawal, revolted against the Sikhs. He closed the passes allowing passage to the northern parts of Hazara. Hari Singh Nalwa surprised him on the range above Darwaza and defeated him after a hard fight, killing his eldest son Sher Muhammad with his own hand.

Expedition to Gandgarh, October, 1824: In September, 1824, the insurgents gathered in a strong body. Hari Singh Nalwa was compelled to retire before them. He sought for reinforcement. Ranjit Singh joined him on 19 October, 1824. They arrived at Gandgarh which lay completely deserted. Their houses were burnt and crops were destroyed. They were pursued across the Indus on 3 November. Yar Muhammad, Governor of Peshawar, met the Maharaja on 10 November, and presented him a few fine horses. Then he marched down the Indus to suppress Baluchi revolts on the border of Sind.

In December, 1824, Hari Singh Nalwa suppressed the revolt of Paindah Khan of Darband. In 1825 the Yusafzais gathered in a huge body to expel the Sikhs from their country. The number of the rebels was five times greater than that of the Sikh force. But fear or fright had no place in the mind of brave Hari Singh Nalwa. Like a roaring lion he rushed upon them and scattered them into the hills from where they had come.

The Tarin Chief Executed, 1825: The Tarin chief who had tried in January, 1821, to rob Hari Singh Nalwa near Muzaffarabad was pursued in Srikot hills. But he managed to give Hari Singh a slip a number of times. He was captured in 1825 and executed.

The Battle of Darband, 1825: The Yusafzais did not lose heart. In 1825, Hari Singh Nalwa was at Darband. He was so hard-pressed that he could hold his ground with the utmost difficulty. After sometime a much larger force attacked him. Hari Singh Nalwa displayed exemplary valour and dispersed it. In 1826, Hari Singh Nalwa had comparatively an easy time.

From 1827 to 1831 the Sikhs were involved in a life and death struggle with Sayyid Ahmad Khan Wahabi, but they came out victorious, and the Sayyid lost his life.

Paindah Khan's Revolt, July, 1832: In July, 1832, Paindah Khan of Darband rose in insurrection in the Hazara hills. He was joined by the neighbouring zamindars. Hari Singh Nalwa suppressed it.

Fatah Khan's Submission and Rebellion: In 1836 Fatah Khan of Panjtar again started fomenting disturbances. Hari Singh Nalwa dashed into the heart of his territory and encamped at the mouth of the Jahangira defile leading to Panjtar. Next morning Hari Singh Nalwa attacked Panjtar and defeated Fatah Khan. The Sikhs destroyed the chief's village and

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compelled him to sign a document for submission and payment of a tribute.

Soon afterwards Fatah Khan began to repent of his act of submission, and towards the close of 1836 again raised the standard of revolt. He made a number of incursions into Chach, extensive plain to the east of the Indus, noted for its numerous breeds of goats. The Maharaja despatched Raja Gulab Singh with a force consisting of three battalions of infantry, a thousand horse and twelve pieces of artillery. On the approach of the Sikhs, the Yusafzais fled into the mountains. Raja Gulab Singh continued his operations leisurely. There was nothing to eat in the upper regions. Hunger forced them to return to the plains to find their hearths and homes reduced to ashes. Starving they came to the camp of the Sikhs, holding a few blades of green grass in their mouths. This implied that they were the cows of the Sikhs and must be saved. They were all blown off from the guns a dozen at a time. Gulab Singh collected Rs. 25,000 and a few horses. He left a garrison of 300 men at Jahangira and returned to Jammu.

5. *Maha Singh, 1837*

Maha Singh succeeded Hari Singh Nalwa who was killed on 30 April, 1837, in the battle of Jamrud fighting against the Afghan army of Dost Muhammad Khan, in the governorship of Hazara. During his tenure of office Fatah Khan of Panjtar created many disturbances. A report of 13 May, 1837, stated that Fatah Khan had recovered his possessions and Yusafzais had thrown off their semblance of allegiance to the Sikh government. On 31 May, 1837, the Maharaja wrote to Raja Gulab Singh directing him to proceed to Akora and inflict a suitable chastisement on Paindah Khan of Darband and Fatah Khan of Panjtar. On 18 June, the Maharaja issued a letter to Fatah Khan of Panjtar desiring him to attend with full confidence on Raja Gulab Singh, in which case he would be treated with every attention; otherwise, he would meet with exemplary punishment.

This did not produce any effect on Fatah Khan, and he continued his activities unabated. The Maharaja instructed General Avitabile to join Raja Gulab Singh. Both advanced into the Yusafzai country in the second half of July, 1837, at the head of 15,000 troops. They occupied a hill overlooking Panjtar and bombarded Panjtar villages. Most of the inhabitants fled away to safe places. Only 300 men with Mullas under the command of Fatah Khan fought for several hours. Fatah Khan was forcibly carried off in the arms of his soldiers to a safe place. The Sikhs

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destroyed some villages and returned the next day. In October, 1837, Kesari Singh of Jammu, who was counted among the best soldiers in the Panjab, was ordered to stay in the neighbourhood of Panjtar with 2,000 horse and a battalion of infantry.

6. *Tej Singh, 1838-44*

General Tej Singh held charge of Hazara and Peshawar from 1838 to 1844. Ranjit Singh died in June, 1839, and the First Afghan War had broken out. Tej Singh's full attention was required at Peshawar. He pleaded for a separate governor for Hazara. The Lahore Durbar gave him a Deputy Governor Arbel Singh, to take exclusive charge of the Yusafzai affairs under him. In the beginning of 1841 Arbel Singh joined his new post.

Meanwhile, Fatah Khan had died in January, 1840. His eldest son Muqarrab Khan succeeded him. His influence extended over a large part of the plains, but his actual authority was limited to about 70 villages. He imposed a tithe on every village, *jazia* on Hindus, a tax on faqirs, and occasionally obtained plunder from Sikhs. With all this he could maintain a force of nearly 2,000 footmen, while about 5,000 men of his own tribe were ready to join him in an emergency.

Fatah Khan's second son was Alam Khan, a 20-year-old youth. He was intelligent and good tempered. His third son was Madad Khan, an obstinate and rash young man. At the age of ten he drew his sword upon his tutor who had slapped him. He immediately ran away from his father's house, to which he never returned. He collected a band of daring lads of his own age and commenced plundering sugarcane fields. He took refuge with Muqarrab Khan who lived independently of his father in a fort 13 km north of Panjtar. Fatah Khan would never utter his name. At his death when he was distributing his property among his sons, somebody mentioned Madad Khan's name. He grew furious and said, "Do not speak of that infidel; he is no child of mine".

Unfriendly Behaviour of Some Englishmen

During the First Afghan War a number of Englishmen stayed at Peshawar. They secretly exerted their influence on Yusafzais against the Sikh government and in favour of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk. F. Mackeson was the British Agent at Peshawar in 1837. Edward Conolly undertook a long tour in these wild regions during the first quarter of 1840. Another Englishman who travelled widely in this country suggested the following policy for the British officers:

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The main principle to guide and conduct should be that everything (in appearance at least) remain on the same footing as in the days of Ahmad Shah and no innovations should be attempted, but with great caution and gradually. Above all, the interference of Europeans should be studiously veiled. The policy, so often successful elsewhere, of organising a body of troops after our fashion and of placing them under an European officer, and thus raising a party amongst the people themselves in our favour, would here, I suspect, prove a sad failure and would excite suspicions of our designs which might lead to the total subversion of the king's (Shah Shuja) authority even when it might have been thought most firmly established. These people cannot be trifled with.

As respects the chiefs, it should be our policy to increase their power and to support their authority. In the sum (plains) the restoration of Mokurrub Khan to his hereditary right as Lord of the Munders (the main Yusafzai clan) would ensure the steady obedience of his tribe). Of the Khans of the Kohistan it would be premature at present to say more than . . . The Syeds should, I think, be bribed, the Moollah kept under.[1]

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The eye-witness Shahamat Ali wrote in 1839:

The Yusafzais are more favourable to the English than the Sikhs. Several letters have been received from them, offering their services in the ensuing campaign, but they being nominally subject to the Sikhs, their offers have been rejected.

7. *Arbel Singh, 1841-43*

Fatah Khan's leadership passed on to Paindah Khan of Amb. His predatory excursions had spread panic in the country in 1840. Arbel Singh led an expedition against him, and encamped at Kharkot near the bank of the Indus on the east. Fighting began in the hills. Just at this time a natural calamity of great magnitude happened. It affected both the parties. A heavy landslide had caused a formation of a dam across the bed of river Indus in the upper regions. On 2 June, 1841, this dam burst and made the collected waters rush down with a frightful roar. The waters swept away numerous villages on both sides of the river for a distance of 5 to 7 km, including the Sikh forts situated at Darband, Torbela and Paindah Khan's capital Amb. The entire Sikh encampment with its guns, magazine and

[1]NAI, Secret Consultations, 4 May, 1840, no. 200.

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luggage was carried away. The fighting going on between the opposing parties was brought to a standstill. Paindah Khan sent a word to the Sikh leader that "God had judged them and made the one as helpless as the other", and suggested dispersal. Thereupon the Sikhs came to Haripur, and Paindah Khan retired to Tanawal.

Nearly 6,000 lives were lost in this flood. The inundation was attended by two remarkable phenomena. Goats crossed the river on the back of elephants and large quantities of gold flowed down. Previously one rupee per trough per annum was the tax imposed on gold washers, and the tax never produced more than five or six hundred rupees. After the flood it brought 5 or 6 thousand a year. Gold washers came from as far south as Kalabagh to share the profits.

8. *Mulraj, 1843-46*

In September, 1843, Diwan Mulraj Dilwala, not of Multan, was appointed governor. He was assisted by General Dhaunkal Singh. At this time, Paindah Khan had become quite active and was helped by the Sayyids of Kaghan, Sher Muhammad Khan of Gandgarh, Arsila Khan of Zaidah, Sultan Najaf Khan of Khatur, Ali Gauhar of Khanpur, Habibullah Khan of Pakhli and the Chibhali tribes. Diwan Mulraj and General Dhaunkal Singh worked in close amity and harmony. In 1844, Paindah Khan was brought to an action and was defeated. A number of his forts were seized, and peace was restored in the country.

The authority of the Sikh government was weakened by Raja Gulab Singh who was at variance with the Lahore Durbar. In September, 1844, Paindah Khan fell ill. Dhaunkal Singh bribed the physician who was treating Paindah Khan, and he was poisoned to death. Paindah Khan's son submitted and asked for a jagir. In the beginning of 1845, a revolt of Yusafzais was suppressed. During the first Anglo-Sikh War the Yusafzais rose again. They stormed the Sikh forts and besieged Haripur, the headquarters of Sikh administration. A Hindustani fanatic Sayyid Akbar of Sitana became their leader, and forced Diwan Mulraj to retire to Hasan Abdal. At the end of the war the Sikh rule over Hazara and Yusafzais came to a close to all intents and purposes.

Comment

Hazara is a land of contrasts, consisting of high mountains and low plains, hills and dales, rivers and rivulets, dense forests and grassy tracts, wild beasts and herds of sheep and goats. Men were most hospitable as well as ferocious and blood-thirsty. They possessed love and hatred to the

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same degree. They had hardly any rival in ignorance and fanaticism.

Ranjit Singh was not fond of this region and its people. Yet he could not ignore them. His main object was to close the road upon the invaders and hungry intruders who were coming in streams day in and day out to settle permanently in this country of profusion and plenty. Without subduing Hazara and Peshawar this object could not be achieved.

The Yusafzais never paid even nominal revenue to the Sikhs without the use of arms. In fighting against the Sikhs they called themselves Ghazis. They considered death while fighting against the Sikhs a sure road to paradise.

The famous German traveller Baron Charles Hugel in 1836 noticed that in Hazara district Ranjit Singh's hold was poor. Paindah Khan's organised bands of robbers in groups of two to three hundred roamed about the country. They were often met with in those parts. They plundered villages and travellers mercilessly.

General Avitabile used to say—"The Eusafzai mountain passes always gave the Sikhs cholera".

On the other hand Griffin says that "the men of Islam were rolled in dust by the triumphant followers of Govind Singh".

In our view from 1826 to 1846 the Lahore Durbar exercised supremacy throughout Hazara. One by one the local chieftains lost their independence. The success of the Sikhs was due to their superior military organisation, solidarity among their ranks, the erection by them of a number of forts at strategic points, and the sure but slow policy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

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CHAPTER 10

Sayyid Ahmad's Holy War against the Sikhs

Sayyid Ahmad declared Jihad against Sikh sway,
Frontier tribes joined him in this fray;
It caused to many Sikhs great dismay,
Eventually the Sayyid fell to Sikh bullets a prey.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was born in a Sayyid family of Rae Bareilly in 1786. He possessed an attractive personality. He was handsome, fairly tall and well-built and dreamy-eyed. He was interested in sports and games, wrestling, swimming, but not in studies. In 1807, he went to Delhi where he studied Persian, *Quran* and *Hadis* under Shah Abdul Qadir and Shah Abdul Aziz. He returned home in 1809. He greatly impressed people by his good character, simplicity and pious life and was married.

In 1811, he went to Malwa and took up service as a horseman under Amir Khan Pindari. He displayed great energy and valour in fighting and Amir Khan promoted him as head of his bodyguards. Amir Khan always consulted him in military and political matters.

Amir Khan's troops were disbanded in 1819. Sayyid Ahmad went to Delhi again and declared himself a divine. He visited Muzaffarnagar, Deoband, Saharanpur, Rampur, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Lucknow and other places. Everywhere he was hailed as a man of God.

At Rampur, an Afghan colony, he was instigated by some Afghans against the Sikhs who had ended the Durrani rule in Panjab. He decided to launch a campaign against the Sikhs.

In July, 1821, Sayyid Ahmad proceeded to Mecca accompanied by a party of 400 persons including women and children. He travelled through Allahabad, Banaras, Ghazipur, Patna, Monghyr, Bhagalpur and arrived at

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Calcutta. In May, 1822, he reached Mecca. He spent nearly one year and a half in Arabia and became a confirmed Wahabi. He returned to Rae Bareilly in May, 1824, via Calcutta.

His real aim was to restore the Islamic state in India. Jihad was the only means to achieve this end. He wanted to uproot the British as well as the Sikhs. He could not fight against both simultaneously. Between the two Sikhs were a lesser power. He turned his attention towards them.

It suited the British authorities that Ranjit Singh should be kept busy in the north-west, so that he might not be able to conquer Sind. Though the British did not give any direct help to the Sayyid, they did not mind help being given to him by the people within their jurisdiction, in men, money and material against the Sikhs. The North-West Frontier Province and the Panjab were predominantly Muslim areas. The Sayyid's task was easier there than in British India.

At Rae Bareilly he spent one year and a half in making necessary preparations for Jihad. He left his home on a Jihad campaign against the Sikhs on Monday, 16 January, 1826. He was then 40 years of age, and the number of his followers was between 500 and 600. The party passed through Gwalior, Tonk, Ajmer, Pali, Haidarabad (Sind), Shikarpur, Quetta, Kandhar, Ghazni and Kabul. In Afghanistan he found people and government un-responsive to his appeals. The battle of Tihri in March, 1823, and death of Azim Khan had caused great frustration. He came to Peshawar, set up his headquarters at Naushahra in December, 1826, and raised the Muhammadi *Jhanda* (banner) of green colour. The four Peshawar chiefs all real brothers – Yar Muhammad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan, Sayid Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan – influenced by the teachings of the Sayyid supported him. Mir Alam Khan of Bajaur, Fatah Khan of Panjtar, Paindah Khan of Amb, Sayyid Jan, chief of Kunar, joined the crusade. His ranks were swelled by the tribals who gathered under his flag in thousands from far and near.

Having established himself well in the land of the fanatic Pathans, Sayyid Ahmad, in conformity with the Islamic Shariat, addressed a proclamation to Ranjit Singh. He laid down certain conditions for compliance by the Maharaja, failing which he threatened him with war. Ranjit Singh took no notice of this ultimatum.

Sayyid Ahmad had three trusted lieutenants, Maulvis Abdul Hai, Muhammad Ismail Khan and Baqar Ali. All of them could deliver fiery speeches to secure men and money for Jihad against the Sikhs.[1]

[1]G.C. Smyth writes: "The Seyd was originally at Peshawar in the service of Sirdar Pheer Mamood Khan as a foot soldier on a monthly salary of 4 or 5 rupees".

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Budh Singh Sandhanwalia

Sardar Budh Singh Sandhanwalia and his two brothers Atar Singh and Lahna Singh were collateral cousins of Ranjit Singh. They were all splendid soldiers, but Budh Singh was the most desperate fighter. Ranjit Singh highly valued him. But he lost confidence of the Maharaja by an unsuccessful daring deed of treachery. In 1825 the Maharaja was staying in Rambagh, Amritsar, when he suddenly fell seriously ill. His physicians feared that he might not survive. Budh singh formed a plot to seize power in case of Maharaja's demise. Ranjit Singh kept his treasure, cash, jewellery and most precious articles in Gobindgarh fort at Amritsar. Jamadar Khushhal Singh was the keeper of the fort. Budh Singh forged a document issued in the name of the Maharaja ordering Khushhal Singh to hand over the fort to Budh Singh. Most of the officers of the fort had been heavily bribed. The order was delivered to the commandant at night. Khushhal Singh refused to entertain it saying that he would not open the gates of the fortress even to the Maharaja himself at this unseemly hour. Thus the plot failed. On recovering the Maharaja was informed of this incident. He took no action against Budh Singh, and only transferred him to Hazara to assist Hari Singh Nalwa. He was posted at Akora.

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The Battle of Akora, 21 December, 1826

Akora was an important place 18 km from Attock across River Indus. It was inhabited mostly by Khatak Afghans. Najaf Khan was their chief. When the Sikhs captured Peshawar, he had fled into the hills. At this time Budh Singh Sandhanwalia, was stationed at Akora with about 4,000 men. The Sayyid organized his forces and got ready for a night assault. The Sayyid's forces consisted of Hindustanis, the Kandharis, Yusafzais and Khataks. The Ghazis were led by Allahbakhsh Khan and the assault was delivered in the early hours of the morning of 21 December, 1826, when the Sikhs lay fast asleep in the intense cold. In the first onslaught many Sikhs were killed. Budh Singh immediately organised his troops in battle array and fell upon the Ghazis, and repulsed them. They left the field and retired into the hills. Budh Singh had won his spurs, but did not follow up his victory. About 500 Sikhs were killed in all, while the Sayyid lost 36 Hindustanis and 46 Kandharis, including Maulvi Baqar Ali of Patna and their commander Allahbakhsh Khan. The Sayyid shifted his headquarters to Sitana at the foot of Mahaban mountains on the western side of the Indus in the heart of Yusafzais.

The Battle of Hazro, January, 1827

Budh Singh Sandhanwalia decided to retire from Akora. The local

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chiefs were greatly impressed with the performance of the Ghazis, and many of them joined them at the head of their troops. The most notable among them were: Ashraf Khan of Zaidah, Fatah Khan of Panjtar, and Khadi Khan of Hund. Budh Singh took up his position at Hazro, a pretty little town, situated in the middle of the fertile Chach valley lying between the Indus and the dry ravines and desolate sand hills of the now Cambellpur plain. On 11 January, 1827, a conference was held at Akora attended by chiefs and important personages from among the Ghazis and the local population. It was decided to attract all the Muslims on both sides of the Indus and Sayyid Ahmad should be declared an Imam. The Hindustani Mujahidin began to address him as Amri-ul-Mominin. The local people called him Sayyid Badshah. His name was mentioned in Friday Khutba. An encounter took place at Hazro in which Budh Singh held his position with great difficulty. The Ghazis fell back to their hiding places.

The Battle of Saidu or Pirpai, March, 1827

Now the Pathans from all around began to flock under the green flag of the Sayyid. In two months their number grew to 50,000. The Barakzai chiefs of Peshawar with an army of 20,000 strong and 8 pieces of cannon joined them.

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A considerable Sikh force under Budh Singh Sandhanwalia was concentrated at the small village of Pirpai near Saidu situated 32 km south of Peshawar and 30 km from Akora. Budh Singh was joined by Raja Gulab Singh, Raja Suchait Singh and Atariwala sardars. The Sikh army numbered about 10,000 with 12 cannon. Budh Singh by tact and diplomacy won over the Barakzai chief of Peshawar to remain neutral.

The Sikhs lay in their trenches under heavy assaults of the Ghazis for a few days. When their supplies were about to be exhausted, Budh Singh led the attack. The Sikh guns created havoc among the enemy. They took to flight. About 6,000 Mujahidin were killed and wounded. Murray says that the Sikh horsemen gave the fleeing Ghazis a hot pursuit "each Sikh killing fifteen to twenty of the runaways". The Sayyid fled into the Swat hills. Ranjit Singh sent dresses of honour to Budh Singh Sandhanwalia and other commanders.

The Sayyid Gathers Strength

Sayyid Ahmad began to live with Fatah Khan of Panjtar, a fanatic and one of the bitterest enemies of the Sikhs. With his help the Sayyid commenced coercing the neighbouring chiefs to support him fully in the

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Jihad against the Sikhs. Ahmad Khan of Hoti, for his lukewarm response, was killed in an action. The Sayyid brought the entire Yusafzai valley under his sway. Mir Babu Khan of Sadhum, a town on the Kalapani river in Peshawar district was subdued. He looked upon Barakzai sardars of Peshawar as his enemies, and incited the Khaibaris to harass them.

The Sayyid made extensive tour of Buner and Swat. He exhorted the people of these areas to unite and end the Sikh rule. Afridis, Mohmands and Khalils were invited to join him in the Jihad. One of his chiefs, Maulvi Ismail was concentrating on Hazara. Many Khans of this region became his active supporters. The most prominent among them were Sarbuland Khan of Tanawal, Habibullah Khan of Swat, Sultan Zabardast Khan of Muzaffarabad, Sultan Najaf Khan of Khatur, Khan Abdul Ghafur Khan of Agror, Nasir Khan of Nandhar and Paindah Khan of Amb. About the middle of 1827 two fierce skirmishes were fought by the Sayyid with the Sikhs at Damgala and Shinkiari.

The Battle of Utmanzai, 1828

Having secured help in men and money, the Sayyid decided to deal with the Barakzai chiefs of Peshawar in 1828. Yar Muhammad Khan intercepted the Sayyid's forces at Utmanzai, situated on the left bank of the Kabul river 30 km away from Peshawar on the road leading to Mardan. The battle lasted the whole day. Some of the Khans in the camp of the Sayyid went over to Yar Muhammad Khan. The Sayyid took to flight in the night.

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Plan to Capture Attcok

Having failed at Peshawar, Sayyid Ahmad planned to seize Attock fort from the Sikhs. Its possession by him would automatically clear Hazara and Peshawar from the Sikhs, and it would open the gateway for the invasion of the Panjab. Khadi Khan of Hund secretly alerted the Sikh commander of the fort, and the plan fell through.

Sayyid Ahmad, in anger attacked the village Haidru, and put to the sword all the inhabitants, both Hindus and Muslims. On hearing this news Hari Singh Nalwa suddenly appeared on the scene and massacred nearly three-fourths of Khalifa's Ghazis. Sayyid Ahmad managed to escape to the west of the Indus.

Ventura's Failure, 1828

General Ventura decided to surprise the Sayyid by delivering an attack on his headquarters at Panjtar. The Mujahidin took full advantage of the

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place. Their tactics forced Ventura to withdraw without achieving anything. His reputation as a first rate general received a serious jolt.

Khadi Khan of Hund Killed, 1829

Sayyid Ahmad made up his mind to punish Khadi Khan of Hund who was secretly in alliance with the Sikhs. In the battle of Hund in 1829, Khadi Khan was defeated and killed.

Yar Muhammad Killed in the Battle of Zaidah, 1829

The death of Khadi Khan frightened Yar Muhammad Khan, chief of Peshawar. He thought he must be the next target of the Sayyid. He decided to forestall him. The opposing forces met at Zaidah in 1829. Yar Muhammad Khan was seriously wounded and he soon afterwards expired. About 300 of his men were killed. His entire camp containing six guns, many horses, arms and ammunition and equippage fell into the hands of the Sayyid. Four guns were fixed at Panjtar and two at Sitana.

Ventura rushed to Peshawar and took control of its administration, and referred the matter to the Maharaja. He directed Ventura to give Peshawar to Yar Muhammad's younger brother Sultan Muhammad Khan and obtain horse Laili from him.

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The Battle of Phulra, 1829

Having succeeded over Ventura and having killed Yar Muhammad Khan, the Sayyid now resolved to turn out the Sikhs from Hazara. There Paindah Khan of Darband and Amb was his greatest supporter. The Sikh forces organized themsevles and defeated Paindah Khan in the battles of Ashra and Amb. Then the Sayyid combined his forces with Paindah Khan. A fierce battle was fought with the Sikhs at Phulra, a place situated on the right bank of the Siran river. It was in possession of Madad Khan, younger brother of Paindah Khan. The Sikhs adopted 'Hit' and 'Run' (or in their own vocabulary *Dahaiphat*) tactics. Sayyid Ahmad Ali Shah, nephew of Sayyid Ahmad, and Mir Faiz Ali of Gorakhpur were killed. The Sayyid took to flight. The Sikhs pursued him. A number of small skirmishes were fought, in which the Sikhs had an upper hand.

The Sayyid's Reforms

In 1830, Sayyid Ahmad subdued Sultan Muhammad Khan, ruler of Peshawar. Now he had reached the zenith of his power. The Sayyid retired to Panjtar where he avoided all stately pretensions. He led a simple holy life, devoting himself to fast and prayers. He decided to

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introduce certain reforms according to Shariat:

1. He enforced the payment of *ashar* or tithe or tribute in cash or kind for public welfare, amounting to one-tenth of one's income. His retainers were sacttered all over the Yusafzai territory and the adjoining hills to collect tithes, fines and cesses.

2. The Afghans carried on sale of their daughters due to shortage of women. The Sayyid ordained that this practice must stop at once. He advised the Pathans to give their daughters in marriage at an early age without receiving money. The Sayyid himself married the daughter of Fatah Khan, chief of Panjtar. He also forcibly married one or two of his Hindustani followers to Pathan girls.

3. Pilgrimage to the tombs of saints to make offerings and soliciting favours were denounced and prohibited.

4. The *Tazias* of Shias were forbidden.

5. Fireworks and sweet pudding (*halwa*) on Shab-e-Barat were condemned.

The Sayyid insisted upon his supporters strictly to follow his reforms.

Opposition to the Sayyid

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The Yusafzais and Khataks did not like these reforms. Money was scarce in these hills, and in fact, gold was their god. The Sayyid's reforms meant loss of money which they could not afford. They were greatly incensed at the prohibition of sale of girls. A secret council of Pathan leaders decided to destroy the Sayyid's followers and soldiers, who demanded Pathan girls as wives free of charge. The secret code word *makai* (maize) implied massacre and the signal was to be given by lighting a bonfire on a Friday. The Peshawar chiefs were involved in the plot, for on the fixed Friday at the sight of the fires on the Yusafzai hills, they slew Maulvi Mazhar Ali and his deputies. Several thousand followers of the Sayyid were massacred. In their fury the Yusafzais marched upon Panjtar to seize and kill the Sayyid. Assisted by his father-in-law Fatah Khan, the Sayyid escaped accompanied by a few followers to Tahkot, and crossing the Indus he found shelter in the mountains of Pakhli and Dhamtaur.

The Sayyid established his headquarters at Rajduwari, and issued appeals to all the neighbouring chieftains to support him in expelling the Sikhs from Hazara and Kashmir. After a couple of months he shifted to Balakot for reasons of security.

The Sayyid Killed in the Battle of Balakot, 8 May, 1831

In May, 1831, Kanwar Sher Singh accompanied by Pratab Singh

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Atariwala and Ratan Singh Garjakhia, arrived in this region. The total strength of the troops under him was about 5,000. He invested Balakot on all sides. The Sayyid had between 2,000 and 3,000 men mostly peasants. The Sikhs slowly advanced narrowing the besieged area gradually. On reaching near the Sayyid's residence, the Sikhs drew out their swords, cut down the peasants like grass, and shot down Sayyid Ahmad. His head was cut off for display, and his body along with the dead bodies of Ghazis was set on fire. About 500 followers of the Sayyid were killed including Maulvi Ismail and Bahram Khan. The entire property of the Sayyid consisting of tents, swivels, swords, horses and one elephant fell into the hands of the Sikhs.

When the news of this victory was brought by a messenger, the Maharaja awarded him a pair of gold bracelets valued at Rs. 200, a turban and a pair of shawls. A sum of Rs. 50,000 along with a letter of appreciation was sent to Sher Singh promising an additional jagir. An order was issued to Faqir Imam-ud-din, Governor of Gobindgarh, to fire a salute of 11 guns and to illuminate the city of Amritsar to celebrate the victory over the Sayyid.

The Causes of the Failure of Jihad

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1. There was a great disparity in respect of training and equipment between the opposing forces. Ranjit Singh had organized his army to a high pitch, trained and disciplined under the French and Italian generals of Napoleon Bonaparte. The Mujahidin were poorly equipped and without proper military training.

2. Ranjit Singh did not depend entirely upon his army to face the challenge of the Mujahidin. He sowed the seeds of dissension among the Pathan chiefs by bribery and intrigue to withdraw their support from Sayyid Ahmad.

3. Complete cooperation between the Hindustani followers of the Sayyid and the local populace was never achieved. The ill-will between them developed into open hostility after the battle of Saidu.

4. Inter tribal jealousies of the Pathans created serious difficulties for the Sayyid.

5. Some Pathan chieftains felt that the Sayyid trusted the Hindustani followers more than he trusted them. This caused discontent among them, and they did not cooperate wholeheartedly.

6. Lack of funds was another cause of the failure of the Jihad campaign. The funds raised from different parts of India were never sufficient to carry on a regular warfare against a powerful foe. When

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relations with Peshawar chiefs became strained, the transmission of funds became difficult. Attempts were made to raise funds locally. To the Pathans nothing could be more irritating than to pay contributions. Taxation became all the more irksome when it was collected regularly and evaders were punished severely.

7. The Sayyid and his lieutenants, perhaps in their zeal for reforming Muslim society, did not take into consideration the peculiar mentality of the Pathans. The appointment of Qazis for adjudication of disputes and the punishment of offenders strictly according to Shariat was not acceptable to the Pathans. It deprived the Jirgahs of their traditional rights and authority.

8. Some of the social reforms introduced by the Sayyid, particularly those concerning girls, were not approved by them.

9. The sectarian propaganda carried on by a section of Mullas who disapproved the reforms contributed to the failure of the Jihad campaign.

10. The Sayyid's call for Jihad gave a severe headache to the Sikh government. The movement was bound to fail in view of the vast resources of the Sikh government in men, money, material and highly centralised government of one of the greatest political and military leaders of the world.

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Comment

Sayyid Ahmad was a Wahabi whose aim was to restore Muslim rule in India. There were only two powers in this country, the British and the Sikhs. The Sayyid was against both. First he turned against the Sikhs, a smaller power than that of the British. After his conquest of Multan in 1818 and of Kashmir in 1819, Ranjit Singh was planning to conquer Sind. The British had their eyes on this land. They were happy at Ranjit Singh's involvement on the North-West Frontier. In consequence, the British Government did not check the Sayyid from raising funds, recruiting men and collecting war material in British territoy to fight the Sikhs. The Sayyid was joined by all the tribes and their chiefs including Ranjit Singh's Barakzai Governors of Peshawar. The Sayyid's religious reforms, his demand for money from Pathans and Ranjit Singh's determination to hold on brought about the Sayyid's fall and his death.

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CHAPTER 11

Peshawar

For 800 years the lovers of Shanti, Shanti,
could not close the Khaibar Pass,
The pig-haters found their match in pig-eaters at last,
Dost Muhammad tried to seize it in vain,
He got First Afghan War into the bargain.

Peshawar

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Peshawar was a green valley watered by small rivers. It had natural boundaries, high mountains in the north, lower hills of Bangash in the south, River Indus on the east and the famous Khaibar Pass on the west. The soil was fertile and productive, and produced in abundance all kinds of grain, fruits and vegetables. There were numerous gardens, of which Shahi Bagh, Ali Mardan Khan's garden and Wazir Fatah Khan's garden were well-known. It was called *Shahar-e-Sabz* (Green city).

Peshawar was a celebrated entrepot of commerce between India and Central Asia. The shawls of Kashmir, fruits of Kabul, raw silk, silk fabrics, velvet, woollen carpets, embroidered *choghas*, furs, drugs and numerous other products passed through this city to various places far and near.

Ranjit Singh's General Avitabile considerably improved the city by widening its bazars and streets. He built a high mud wall round the city to protect it from tribal raids. The Sikhs built a strong fort on the site of old Bala Hisar which afforded protection to the inhabitants in an emergency. Burj-e-Hari Singh was a small mud fort 7 km distant from Peshawar to the left of the road. Another fort called Fatahgarh was constructed near Jamrud. It was about 300 square yards in measurement and square in plan.

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The Khaibar Pass

The Khaibar Pass and Peshawar city are twins which go together. They formed a link between Afghanistan and India. The Khaibar Pass started at Kadam near Jamrud 18 km west of Peshawar. It passed through barren and brown hills without any trees or bushes for 55 km in northwesterly direction upto Dakka. A road ran through the pass between the hills, allowing only four horsemen to ride abreast. The most important places enroute were:

1. Ali Masjid is a village and a fort 18 km from Jamrud. The road was very narrow. There was a great scarcity of water and it was not a suitable place for a cantonment.
2. Landi Kotal and Landi Khana are at the summit of the Pass 16 km farther.[1] Near Landi Khana the road was only about twenty feet wide. The height of the summit of the Pass is 3,373 feet above sea level. The Pass was subjected to sudden floods in July-August and December-January.
3. Kabul is situated 180 miles or 300 km from Peshawar on the right bank of Kabul river.
4. Tor Kham, was 10 km from Landi Kotal. At this point the Pass entered the Afghan territory.

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The whole length of the Khaibar Pass, 44 km, was inhabited by five tribes, bearing the general name of Afridi. Each tribe had its own separate chief. Kuki Khail controlled the area lying between Jamrud and Ali Masjid. Thus they possessed the entrance of the Pass. In 1838 their chief was Abdur Rahman Khan. Ranjit Singh paid Rs.1,200 a month to the Kuki Khail people to keep the water channel running for supplying water to Fatahgarh fort. The head of all the Afridi tribes, Saadat Khan held a jagir worth Rs. 14,000 per annum in the Doaba of Peshawar. They levied blackmail on travellers and merchants passing through their territory. They abducted Hindus and Sikhs, both men and women, and released them on receiving a handsome ransom. Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk paid to the Khaibaris a sum of Rs. 60,000 a year to allow a safe passage to travellers and traders.

The Waziris

The Waziris were a powerful tribe spreading from Kohat southwards

[1]The British Government had established a cantonment here and this place had connection by railway with Peshawar. The author travelled by it in 1930.

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to Derah Ismail Khan. They were wholly a lawless people. When crops were ready to be harvested, they descended from the hills, plundered and withdrew. In 1827 they laid waste a large area near Derah Ismail Khan. A strong force was sent to punish them. They carried off Hindu and Sikh men and women for ransom. Diwan Sawan Mal paid to their chief Dost Muhammad Khan a monthly stipend of Rs. 200 to prevent plunder through the passes stretching from Sangarh to Mahoi.

Ranjit Singh's North-West Frontier Policy

The North-West Frontier region west of river Indus was inhabited by the most turbulent Pathans who entertained the utmost hatred for Hindus and Sikhs. In the beginning, Ranjit Singh after conquering it put various places under local Muslim chiefs, to receive in acknowledgement of his authority, nominal tribute in the form of a few horses, or some quantity of Bara rice, or the whole crop of mango fruit of a certain tree, or a number of hawks, or fresh and dry fruit, or a paltry sum in cash.

At Peshawar he appointed in succession, Jahandad Khan, Yar Muhammad Khan, and his brother Sultan Muhammad Khan. The district of Hashtnagar was given to Sultan Muhammad's brother Sayyid Muhammad Khan. The Doaba was assigned to Samad Khan. The districts of Kohat, Bannu and Tank worth three lakhs of rupees annually were granted to the third brother Pir Muhammad Khan in lieu of military service. Derah Ismail Khan was entrusted to Hafiz Ahmad Khan. Derah Ghazi Khan was farmed out to the Nawab of Bahawalpur.

After the fall of Sayyid Ahmad Wahabi in 1831, Ranjit Singh felt strong enough to deal directly with the inhabitants, and he brought the whole region under him. Derah Ghazi Khan and Derah Ismail Khan were annexed in 1831, Bannu and Tank in 1832 and Kohat and Peshawar in 1834. Derah Ghazi Khan was united with the province of Multan under Diwan Sawan Mal. The districts of Derah Ismail Khan, Isakhail, Tank and Bannu were entrusted to Hakim Rae, Kohat and Peshawar to Hari Singh Nalwa, and the district of Akora to Piara Mal.

First Occupation of Peshawar, 20 November, 1818

Wazir Fatah Khan was killed in August, 1818. The government of Afghanistan fell into confusion. Ranjit Singh took advantage of the political situation at Kabul. In October, 1818, he captured Khairabad and its neighbouring territory along the western bank of the Indus, belonging to Firoz Khan, the Khatak chief. He then marched upon Peshawar and occupied it on 20 November, 1818. Its governor Yar Muhammad Khan

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Barakzai fled to Yusafzai country. The leading chiefs and citizens offered a tribute of Rs. 25,000 and saved the city from pillage.

The Maharaja gave its charge to Jahandad Khan, the ex-governor of Attock. Ranjit Singh left no troops with him. He was given no war material. On the contrary he brought 19 guns found in Peshawar to Attock. On Ranjit Singh's departure Yar Muhammad Khan expelled Jahandad Khan. Muhammad Azim Khan, Governor of Kashmir, had succeeded Fatah Khan as Prime Minister at Kabul. Ranjit Singh took no action against Yar Muhammad Khan for four years. In 1819, the Maharaja conquered Kashmir. In 1822 he demanded tribute from Yar Muhammad Khan. In June, 1822, he paid to the Maharaja Rs. 40,000 in cash and gave a few fine horses. He agreed to pay a tribute of Rs. 20,000 annually.

Muhammad Azim Khan did not approve of Yar Muhammad Khan's submission to Ranjit Singh. He decided to expel the Sikhs from Peshawar and other trans-Indus territories. The warlike Yusafzais and Khataks joined him in a holy war. On 14 March, 1823, in the bloody battle of Tihri near Naushahra, Ranjit Singh inflicted a crushing defeat on the Wazir. Azim Khan felt so much heart broken that he died of grief and disgrace after one month and a half in the beginning of May, 1823. Yar Muhammad Khan continued as a tributary Governor of the Lahore Durbar.

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Gauharbar

In the battle of Saidu in March, 1827, between Budh Singh Sandhanwalia and Sayyid Ahmad Shah, Yar Muhammad Khan had joined the Sayyid, but with great persuasion had been dissuaded by Budh Singh to remain neutral during the contest. Ranjit Singh came to Peshawar and destroyed Yar Muhammad's palace in the Bala Hisar. He reprimanded the chief, increased his tribute and took up Yar Muhammad's son as a hostage for his good behaviour. The Barakzai chief pacified him by presenting a famous horse called 'Gauharbar' (The pearl showerer).

Sultan Muhammad Khan

In 1829 Sayyid Ahmad attacked Yar Muhammad Khan for his alliance with the Sikhs and killed him. General Ventura was in the neighbouring hills. He immediately came to Peshawar and restored order. Ranjit Singh directed Ventura to place Peshawar province under Sultan Muhammad Khan, brother of the deceased, and to receive the horse Laili from him. Yar Muhammad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan, Sayyid Muhammad

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Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan were four uterine brothers from one of the wives of Paindah Khan Barakzai. Sultan Muhammad Khan was 30 years old and was considered a model of Kabul fashions. On account of his excessive love for finery, Dost Muhammad Khan called him Sultan Bibi. In 1831 Mohan Lal found him spending most of his time in the company of women both married and unmarried. Alexander Burnes recorded that he was an educated Afghan "well-bred gentleman whose open and affable manner made a lasting impression upon me". Everyone was on equality with him, "and the meanest servant addresses him without ceremony", and "Nothing could have surpassed the kindness of this nobleman".

The Battle of Toru, 1830

Exhorted by his mother, Sultan Muhammad Khan decided to punish the Sayyid for the death of his brother. This led to the battle of Toru, a town in tahsil Naushahra in which the Barakzai chief lost heavily. Peshawar fell into the hands of the Sayyid. Instead of removing him, the Sayyid retained Sultan Muhammad Khan as Governor of Peshawar on the following conditions:

1. To allow free passage to Ahmad's men bringing money and other things from Sayyid's followers in India.
2. To appoint a Qazi of Sayyid's choice at Peshawar to administer justice according to the laws of the *Quran*. Maulana Sayyid Mazhar Ali of Azimabad was appointed Qazi with Faizullah Khan Mohmand and Arsila Khan Khalil as his deputies.
3. To pay the Sayyid a monthly tribute of Rs. 3,000. According to Masson Sultan Muhammad Khan offered one lakh of rupees in lump sum.

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With the conquest of Peshawar, the reputation of the Sayyid reached its zenith. Sayyid Ahmad retired to Panjtar.

Annexation of Peshawar, 1834

In 1833, Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General, had allowed Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk to enlist an army to recover his lost throne of Kabul. A treaty was concluded between the Shah and the Maharaja. Ranjit Singh was to help the Shah in recovering the Kabul throne, and the Shah would renounce his claims upon Peshawar, Trans-Indus territory, Attock, Multan and Kashmir which had been conquered by the Maharaja. But

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Ranjit Singh placed no reliance on the Shah who had openly declared that agreements were meaningless and it was power that mattered. Besides, he feared that Sultan Muhammad Khan and his brothers might tender allegiance to the Shah in case of his success in the forthcoming struggle. Further Sultan Muhammad Khan paid tribute only when an army was sent against him. Dost Muhammad considered Peshawar essential for the preservation of his kingdom of Kabul. The Maharaja, therefore, decided to bring Peshawar under his direct control before the fight took place between Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk and Dost Muhammad Khan.

Ranjit Singh ordered Hari Singh Nalwa to proceed to Peshawar from Yusafzai hills. Prince Nau Nihal Singh, Ventura and Court were sent from Lahore to Peshawar at the head of 9,000 soldiers. They crossed the Indus at the end of April, 1834. Sultan Muhammad Khan fled away to Kabul and joined his brother Dost Muhammad Khan.

At this time Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk was at Kandhar. Dost Muhammad Khan was busy in preparaing to fight the Shah at Kandhar. The time was most opportune. The Maharaja established his own administration at Peshawar in May, 1834, and appointed Hari Singh Nalwa its governor. Dost Muhammad defeated the Shah in June, 1834. Hari Singh commanded a force of 12,000 men to maintain law and order. His jurisdiction was over the whole region, to the west of the Indus. Sikh regiments were stationed at selected points on the border. A mobile column was posted in the angle at the confluence of rivers Indus and Kabul, on the left bank of the latter commanded by the strong fortress of Jahangira. Dost Muhammad incessantly instigated the tribes to continue Jihad or holy war against the Sikhs. His call was responded by Haji Khan Kakar and Saadat Ali Khan and they created disturbances at a number of places.

Dost Muhammad Khan at Peshawar, 1835

Dost Muhammad Khan was the twentieth son of Paindah Khan. His mother was an Iranian lady who brought him up in Iranian environment. This made him intelligent and a critical observer of men and their affairs. He was a strong and reckless youth, a lover of wine and women. He respected strength of body and mind. He chose his first wife who as a young girl of 12 or 13 had eaten 50 eggs at a breakfast party in his presence.

On the death of Azim Khan in 1823, anarchy prevailed in Afghanistan. Dost Muhammad Khan emerged as the strongest and undisputed leader in Afghanistan. In 1826, he seized Kabul, supplanted Ahmad Shah Durrani's dynasty and established himself as an independent sovereign of

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Afghanistan under the title of Amir.

Dost Muhammad Khan was of the view that the eastern boundary of Afghanistan must be on the Indus. He felt that with Peshawar and the entrance to the Khaibar Pass in Ranjit Singh's occupation, Afghanistan could be easily invaded, because the Lion of Panjab was reversing the old course of the current of history. He was, therefore, determined to seize Peshawar by any means, fair or foul.

He invited help from his neighbours. Murad Beg of Kunduz replied: "I take no interest in your affairs". The Kandhar chiefs said on account of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk's presence in the neighbourhood they could do nothing. The Amirs of Sind demanded a written agreement that the Amir would not increase the amount of tribute fixed by Wazir Fatah Khan, and that he would help them in case of an invasion by the English or the Sikhs. Dost Muhammad sought British help also for recovering Peshawar. He was informed that in matters concerning the Sikhs their policy was of strict neutrality. Only two minor chiefs promised support, Mir Alam Khan of Bajaur and Fatah Khan of Panjtar.

Dost Muhammad decided to try his luck. Mohan Lal says that the Amir had no money to recruit soldiers. He squeezed 1½ lakhs of rupees from Hindu merchants of Kabul. A religious war was the only alternative left to him. The call for Jihad brought religious fanatics from all sides. Dost Muhammad assumed the title of Amir-ul-Mominin Sahib-e-Zaman Ghazi. He won over his brother Sultan Muhammad Khan, both taking oaths of fidelity on the holy *Quran*. But there was no love lost between the two brothers. Sultan Muhammad Khan was to marry a princess of the extinct Durrani family. Dost Muhammad also coveted her. He forcibly carried her away and married her. Sultan Muhammad Khan often said that nothing would afford him greater pleasure than to drink the blood of Dost Muhammad Khan.

In the beginning of 1835, Dost Muhammad marched at the head of 40,000 ferocious Afghans with 37 cannon and three lakhs of rupees for distribution among the holy warriors.

Ranjit Singh was not unaware of these warlike preparations. He left Lahore about the middle of March, 1835. On 16 and 17 March, he hunted in the Bela or reserve forest at Murlan. He was at Gujranwala on 19 March and showered gold on the people. He reached Wazirabad on 20 March, Gujrat on 22 March, and Rohtas on 29 March. There he stayed upto 20 April, 1835. He arrived at Rawalpindi on 25 April. On 28 April right through heavy rain he reached Serai Kala at Hasan Abdal on the 29th, and at Attock on 30 April. He crossed River Indus on 1 May, 1835,

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and halted at Khairabad. On 2 May, he encamped at Naushahra. He inspected the fort of Jahangira on 4 May, 1835.

The Battle of Ramkani, 4 May, 1835

There 3 to 4 thousand horsemen of Barakzais and Ghazis came to check Maharaja's advance. A fierce battle raged from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. at Ramkani near Naushahra. The enemy sometimes advanced and sometimes retreated. The Maharaja had decided to fight a defensive battle. The Afghans retired in the night. Missar Sukhraj displayed great bravery and the Maharaja rewarded him on the spot with an estate worth Rs. 10,000 a year.

Arrival at Peshawar

On 6 May, 1835, Ranjit Singh reached the suburbs of Peshawar. He had strictly forbidden firing a salute. Sultan Muhammad Khan presented the Maharaja five horses and two swords. Ranjit Singh made him sit upon a carpet by his side and dictated him a letter for Dost Muhammad Khan to make peace. On 7 May, Ranjit Singh viewed Dost Muhammad's camp through a telescope. Dost Muhammad Khan lay encamped at the mouth of the Khaibar Pass with 40 to 50 thousand of his own troops and 60 to 80 thousand Ghazis. The Maharaja established his camp at village Kaikuon on the bank of river Bara, and his army was stationed 6 km away from Dost Muhammad Khan's camp over an area of 15 km long.

Faqir Aziz-ud-din and Harlan were sent to Dost Muhammad Khan to persuade him to retire. Hot words passed between the Amir and the Faqir. Mohan Lal says that Dost Muhammad Khan called Aziz-ud-din the soul of Ranjit Singh, and wished to send him to Kabul. He was to be liberated on the restoration of Peshawar. Sultan Muhammad Khan brought Aziz-ud-din to his camp. Dost Muhammad Khan ordered his artillery to enter the Khaibar Pass and himself joined it at midnight on 10 May.

The French division of the Sikh army under Allard, Avitabile, Court and Ventura, 20 to 22 thousand men marched towards Hashtnagar and then slowly and cautiously moved towards the left flank of Dost Muhammad's army. The main Sikh army 60 to 80 thousand strong horse and foot under the command of Maharaja Ranjit Singh threatened Dost Muhammad's centre and right flank.

Dost Muhammad Khan Flees Away

Ranjit Singh ordered payment to the whole army before delivering the attack. All arrears, with one month's pay in addition as a present were

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paid. One lakh men of the Sikh army were paid off in four hours. A general attack along the whole line was to begin at four o'clock on 11 May. The army had not advanced even one km when the word 'fled, fled' echoed in the whole region.

Dost Muhammad Khan Retreats Without Fighting

Harlan says that Dost Muhammad felt extremely confused at the intelligence that the Sikh army had surrounded the Afghans on all sides with a heavy park of artillery, and there was no chance of success. In his bewilderment "approaching his horse to mount with the prospect of battle before him, he put the wrong foot in stirrup which would have placed his face towards the animal's tail". He considered it a bad omen and decided to beat a hasty retreat.

Dost Muhammad had fled in the night into the Khaibar Pass with all his troops and Ghazis, taking all his arms, ammunition, other stores and all his guns. Nothing was left in his camp. The Sikh army stayed there for two days. The camp was broken on the third day and the whole army retired to Peshawar.

The Maharaja Returned to Lahore

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The Maharaja became sad and gloomy. He said lakhs of rupees had been spent and not a single cannon or a horse came into his possession. The Maharaja came to Peshawar on 11 May, and showered gold upon the inhabitants. On 17 May, he granted an estate of 3 lakhs to Sultan Muhammad Khan who offered eleven horses and one sword as *nazar*. His jagirs consisted of Hashtnagar and half of Doaba. His brother Pir Muhammad Khan was granted Kohat and Hanza. The brothers were not sincerely attached to Ranjit Singh. While Sultan Muhammad Khan could keep his tongue in his heart, Pir Muhammad Khan sometimes put his heart on his tongue. He told Alexander Burnes that the territory under his control abounded in mines, and "he would be happy to resign to the English Government for a small sum of money". He agreed to accompany the Maharaja to Lahore and live there upto Dasahra in October. Whenever required he would join the Maharaja with his troops, four cannon and fifteen zamburaks. On 18 May Ranjit Singh granted to Qazis, Sayyids, ulema and faqirs of Peshawar robes of honour and confirmed them in their jagirs.

Ranjit Singh's singular victory raised his prestige high and firmly established his sway west of the Indus. In case of his defeat he would have been driven out of Trans-Indus country and from Attock and Hazara as

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well. Dost Muhammad Khan had damaged his own reputation. He was rediculed for assuming the title of Amir-ul-Mominin. He felt so much downcast that he said he would like to spend his life in studying the *Quran*. After 5 or 6 days' rest the Maharaja turned towards Lahore, leaving Hari Singh Nalwa in charge of Peshawar.

It could not be called a bloodless victory as the Sikhs daily lost 100 to 150 or even 200 men in skirmishes. The cavalry charges by 2,000 to 5,000 men, were indeed bloody affairs. The Ghazis, each with his little green Muslim flag, freely advanced and courted death and martyrdom. They were only frightened at the sight of large heaps of dead Ghazis burning due to the belief that through burning they would go to hell. While crossing the Indus on his way back a full boatload of regular infantry were drowned at Attock. On the way Gakhars harassed them.

After sometime at Attock Ranjit Singh kept a fleet of 37 large boats, fastened by thick iron ropes keeping a little distance between two boats. The rope was covered with wooden planks. The width of the river Indus at the place of bridge of boats was 260 yards.

Prinsep writes:

> It is said that Runjeet made an offer to Dost Mahomed Khan of a jagir, of 30,000 a year, on condition that he would relinquish all claim to Peshawar, and cease to molest the Sikh troops, and that this offer was at first received favourably though afterwards declined.

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Disturbances by Tribes

In June, 1836, a large body of Qizalbashis and Ghilzais under Dost Muhammad Khan's direction engaged Nau Nihal Singh in a serious conflict in which Haji Khan Kakkar and Saadat Ali Khan attacked the Sikhs near Jamrud late in 1836. They were severely wounded and fled away.

In the beginning of 1837 the Afridis carried away some Sikhs as prisoners. Hari Singh Nalwa tried to secure their release peacefully. Having failed in this attempt he attacked them. In the engagement he lost 6 men and 20 horses. Three Afridis were captured alive and 60 were killed in the action.

The Battle of Jamrud

In the beginning of 1837 the Maharaja and all his courtiers got fully busy in the preparations of Prince Nau Nihal Singh's marriage. The British Commander-in-Chief had agreed to represent the British Government on this occasion. The Maharaja was very keen to impress

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him with power, wealth and army at their best. He recalled the best troops and generals from all places including Peshawar for the parade. Hari Singh Nalwa was left with a small force of inferior troops without any commander of note to help him. The Maharaja instructed Hari Singh Nalwa to build a fort at Jamrud at the mouth of Khaibar Pass. Mihan Singh was put in charge with 600 troops. Hari Singh Nalwa lived at Peshawar in the new fortress built on the site of old Bala Hisar.

Dost Muhammad Khan considered the Jamrud fort a great threat to his kingdom. He erected a fort at Ali Masjid in the Khaibar Pass. Finding the Maharaja too busy at Lahore and his best troops collected there, Dost Muhammad Khan considered it the most suitable time to retrieve his lost prestige. He did not take the command himself, because a second defeat would have completely ruined him. He sent the flower of his army, 7,000 horse, 2,000 matchlockmen and 9,000 guerilla fighters, under his sons Muhammad Akbar Khan and Muhammad Afzal Khan and his Wazir Mirza Sami Khan. About 20,000 Ghazi tribesmen joined them.

On 10 March, 1837, a letter came from Hari Singh Nalwa informing the Maharaja that Dost Muhammad Khan had reached Jalalabad in order to attack Peshawar. He requested for immediate help. He was told that after the departure of Lat Sahib, Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief, troops would be sent to him. On 25 March, 1837, Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan reached Lahore. The Maharaja granted them Rs. 3,000 for entertainment and 100 trays of sweets. On 19 April, 1837, sons of Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan were given Rs. 500, costly *doshalas* and pairs of gold bangles and were allowed to leave for Peshawar. On 21 April, 1837, Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan were granted rich robes of 11 pieces, one elephant with a silver howdah, 2 horses and jewellery. On 21 April, 1837, another letter was received from Hari Singh. It stated that Akbar, Afzal, Shirin Khan, Haidar, Akram and Jabbar Khan had crossed the Khaibar Pass, and had entrenched themselves 3 km from Jamrud fort between Jamrud and Peshawar. The Maharaja ordered Nau Nihal Singh, Tej Singh, Allard, Court, Avitabile, Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Atariwalas, Raja Gulab Singh, Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan, marching at a breakneck speed, to reach Peshawar in 5 days, 500 km distant. The Maharaja himself left bag and baggage. Another letter of Hari Singh Nalwa was received on 28 april, 1837. It said that Dost Muhammad Khan was carrying on an incessant shower of cannon balls upon the walls of the fort of Jamrud, and had completely demolished one side of the wall of the fort. Mihan Singh, keeper of the

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fort, continued firing from inside the fort and killed about 500 Afghans.

Some men from the fort in disguise came to Hari Singh Nalwa in Peshawar saying that the water channel had been cut off and there was no water in the fort of Jamrud to repair the wall. Hari Singh Nalwa sent 500 water carriers with water skins. The 29th April, 1837, was the day of Ekadsi. After feeding Brahmans, Hari Singh Nalwa left for Jamrud with 6,000 foot, 1,000 regular cavalry, 3,000 irregulars, and 20 pieces of artillery. In order to lure the Afghan army to one place he sent a letter to Mihan Singh that he was ill and could not come and that he should face the enemy boldly. This letter as it was intended, was intercepted.

Early in the morning on 30 April, 1837, Hari Singh Nalwa began a heavy cannonade. He then feigned a retreat. It drew the whole Afghan army from hill sides into the plain below. The Najib battalion opened fire upon the Afghans. Hari Singh Nalwa pushed into the midst of the Afghans towards Amir's son Afzal Khan and Nawab Jabbar Khan. The Afghans began to retreat. A large part of Hari Singh Nalwa's army got busy in plundering the Afghan refugees. A fresh force of Dost Muhammad Khan from Ali Masjid drove them back with heavy losses. Hari Singh Nalwa rallied his men and rode to the front. He was struck by two balls, one in the stomach and the other in the side. Hari Singh Nalwa was immediately taken inside the fort. He expressed four wishes before he expired:

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1. Send back the Sadhus, Brahmans and Faqirs who are with me.
2. Arrange for the marriage of my daughter.
3. Remain loyal to Mihan Singh and steadfast in the battle of Jamrud.
4. Keep secret the news of my death.

Hari Singh then expired. Mihan Singh remained coolheaded. He concealed the news of the General's death. He encouraged his men to show valour and bravery in the name of Khalsa Panth, the Sikh State and loyalty to the Maharaja.

In 1836, the Sikhs had erected a fort at Shabqadar situated to the north of Peshawar. It commanded the Gandab road next to Khaibar Pass in importance. Lahna Singh Sandhanwalia was in charge of it with 1,500 men. During the battle of Jamrud a diversion was planned by Mirza Sami Khan Wazir of Kabul. Haji Khan Kakar and Alam Khan attacked it, but they were repulsed.

An engagement took place between the Sikhs and Muhammad Akbar Khan. In the first onslaught the Afghans were driven off the field into the

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defiles of the Khaibar hills leaving behind their guns. The Sikh cavalry, 3,000 in number, pursued them into the Khaibar Pass. Only four horsemen could ride abreast through the Pass. The Sikh horsemen had gone 3½ km into the Pass. Akbar Khan was with only 100 Afghan horsemen. A fresh force from Ali Masjid joined him. With the shouts of Allaho Akbar, they violently and most enthusiastically charged their pursuers. Their Turki chargers delivered a meteor-like charge. The Sikhs were instantly overwhelmed. Dismounting they fled back pell-mell. Many of them were killed and wounded. At the mouth of the Pass the Sikh infantry checked Akbar Khan's progress. His horse received three musket balls and three bayonet wounds, and had one of its hind legs broken by a ball. The noble animal fell. All the Afghan soldiers also fell likewise. Akbar Khan managed to escape.

In the second assault Mihan Singh's brother Jawahar Singh was killed. Mihan Singh put the corpses of Hari Singh and Jawahar Singh in the same coffin, declaring it to be of his brother and cremated them. "In this act", said the Maharaja, "he showed an example of rare courage".

Just then, General Allard arrived there with reinforcements. At the sight of fresh arrivals, the Afghans hurriedly retired to Jalalabad, with a number of Sikh heads to be shown as trophies of the war at Kabul.

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The two sides lost heavily, about 7,000 men. A son of Dost Muhammad Khan and several chiefs lost their lives. On the part of the Sikhs, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, the flower of the Sikh army, was killed.

The effect of this battle on both the parties was tremendous. Dost Muhammad fully realized that it was impossible for him single handed to recover Peshawar. He told Alexander Burnes:

> My sons and people may speak in exaggerated terms of our late success, but it is too evident that our power is not one-tenth of that of the Panjab.

Dost Muhammad feared an invasion of Kabul by Ranjit Singh in retaliation. Indeed Ranjit Singh had made up his mind to annex Eastern Afghanistan with its capital at Jalalabad. By this time the British Government had come to the conclusion that, in fact, Panjab belonged to them and that Afghanistan must be brought under their sphere of influence. Thinking that Panjab and Afghanistan would soon belong to them, they prohibited the Maharaja from advancing beyond Jamrud under any circumstances.

In frustration and sheer despair, Ranjit Singh told Wade in September,

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1837, "that he would be glad to give up Peshawar if he could save his *purdah* (honour)".

The Maharaja lost a general, the bravest of the brave, by sheer negligence, just to please the British. Hari Singh Nalwa's death cast a gloom over the whole of Panjab. The Maharaja bore the loss in a bold spirit. According to his usual practice he seized all the property of Hari Singh Nalwa including eighty lakhs of rupees in cash deposited with the bankers of Amritsar. His salary at the time of his death was Rs. 3,67,000 annually.

The Afghans considered the battle of Jamrud a national victory. Muhammad Akbar Khan plumed himself. The whole city of Kabul was illuminated and bonfires were lit everywhere. But the success of the Afghans lay only in killing Hari Singh Nalwa.

The fort of Jamrud could not be seized or destroyed for which they had fought the battle. The Shabqadar fort remained with the Sikhs. The Sikh rule in the Peshawar province was as firm after the battle as it was before.

From Lahore to Peshawar

Ranjit Singh had ordered the whole army to reach Peshawar in the shortest possible time, each commander choosing his own road. Dhian Singh reached Jamrud with 10,000 to 12,000 irregular cavalry on the morning of the seventh day from Chiniot. Gulab Singh, at the head of his contingent, reached Khairabad opposite Attock on the morning of the ninth day. The same day the rest of the Sikh army began crossing the Indus pell-mell.

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Dost Muhammad Khan's Double-Faced Policy

On the arrival of this formidable force at Peshawar, Dost Muhammad Khan was frightened. He was not prepared to face another battle with the Sikhs. He sent a letter of apologies accompanied by a present of a number of horses to the Maharaja. He told him that his sons had acted without his approval. On the other hand, about one year later he told Alexander Burnes:

"I can't do that brute any real harm, but I will torment him a good deal yet before I have done with him". The brute was Ranjit Singh.

On 8 July, 1838, Osborne recorded that a report had been received from Peshawar. Dost Muhammad Khan with his Afghans had attacked and utterly defeated a large body of the Sikh army under one of Ranjit's favourite generals, and had killed and taken prisoners upwards of 500 of them. Ranjit Singh remarked that a trifling defeat now and then was useful, as it taught both men and officers caution.

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General Avitabile

Ranjit Singh appointed General Avitabile governor of Peshawar. Prinsep says that he acted as a savage among savage men. He resorted to summary hangings. On special days and festivals he added 2 or 3 to the string suspended from the gibbet. He did not take full care to distinguish between innocence and guilt, and innocent men paid with their lives the price of blood. When a Sikh disappeared at or near any village in Peshawar territory, he fined that village or demanded immediate surrender of the murderer or murderers. Such scenes frequently occurred in the streets of Peshawar. This was his way to deal with a lawless people to restrain their evil practices. Prinsep adds that Avitabile was a good ruler, intelligent, bold and active. He went about and saw everything, with his own eyes. He was up early. He saved many lives by the terror of his name. The people both Hindu and Muslim praised maintenance of law and order, but they complained that there was no element of mercy in his administration.

Comment

It was after about 2,000 years that Ranjit Singh closed the invader's gateway to India. For this reason he deserves the fullest praise. In this task he faced the fury of lawless tribes of the North-West Frontier and of the government of Afghanistan. Amir Dost Muhammad Khan of Kabul, in vain strained every nerve to seize the entrance to the Khaibar Pass and Peshawar. His declarations of Jihad bore no fruit. The greatest loss suffered by the Panjab was in the death of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, the flower of the Sikh army, but not an inch of Sikh territory was lost. Dost Muhammad Khan expected retaliation by Ranjit Singh and he tried to coax him with flattery and present of horses. After 800 years the pig-haters had found their match in pig-eaters.

Ranjit Singh was determined to seize eastern Afghanistan with its capital at Jalalabad, but the British government came in his way. He had indeed given up his mind and soul to the British.

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CHAPTER 12

The Borderland of Sind

Of all the Durrani provinces in this land,
Sind was the weakest to make a stand;
Ranjit Singh earnestly wished it to seize,
But he could not his British masters displease.

Sind

Sind was bounded on the north and west by the territories of the Khan of Qalat in Baluchistan, on the north-east by Panjab and the Bahawalpur state, on the east by Jaisalmer and Jodhpur and on the south by the Rann of Kachh and the Arabian Sea. Its area was nearly 57,000 square miles. Its length from north to south was 576 km and breadth 272 km. Its population was about 24 lakhs, three-fourths Muslims and one-fourth Hindus. The Sindhis possessed quiet nature and inoffensive disposition.

In Ranjit Singh's time Sind was ruled over by the Baluchi Chiefs of the Talpur tribe. Sind was divided into three states–Haidarabad, Khairpur and Mirpur. There were four Mirs at Haidarabad, three Mirs at Khairpur and two Mirs at Mirpur.

The revenues of Haidarabad amounted to 10 lakhs, of Khairpur to 10 lakhs and of Mirpur to 5 lakhs. The military strength consisting of regular and irregular troops of Haidarabad was 20,000, of Khairpur 12,000, and of Mirpur 8,000. Their main stregnth lay in cavalry which was most inefficient and absolutely worthless.

Ranjit Singh's Timidity

Ranjit Singh was very keen to seize Sind. But for reasons known only to himself he was determined not to conquer it without the approval of the British Government. In 1812 he asked Ochterlony whether the

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British Government had any design on Sind. Like military men who are generally frank and straightforward, he replied in a bold 'No'. Ranjit Singh was not satisfied. He went on sounding British political officers upto the Governor-General till his death, but they were reticent about it. His frequent enquiries goaded them to seize it, and they succeeded admirably to the extreme anguish and chagrin of the Maharaja.

Osborne wrote on 30 May, 1838:

> ". . . but for the watchful jealousy of the British government, (he) would long ere this have added Scinde, if not Afghanistan, to his present kingdom."

The Baluchis

Between Ranjit Singh's territory and Sind lay the area under Baluchi chiefs. Like the Pathans and Afghans they were a warlike people given to robbery, dacoity and thieving. They were always armed with swords, matchlocks, sabres and knives. Almost everyone of them possessed a mare of his own. A horse was disliked for his habit of neighing during a plundering raid. The mares could bear greater heat than horses. If a Baluch did not have a mare of his own, he shared it with another on a quarterly basis. It was common for a Baluch to own shares in several mares. They were expert riders as horse-racing was their national game. They were reputed for long journeys both on foot and saddle. They were good fighters. They lived mostly in villages, and their wealth consisted in cattle, camels, mares, sheep and goats. They considered war as their trade and despised agriculture. They were notorious thieves, robbers and marauders. About their devastating habit a poet says:

> *Baluche keh duzdi wa gharat nasakht,*
> *Khudawand rahmat bar-o-band sakht.*
> (God will not favour a Baluch who does not steal and destroy).

> *Baluche keh duzdi kunad kusht-o-khun,*
> *Bajannat rawad haft pusht-o-kanun.*
> (A Baluch who commits thefts and murders, secures paradise for seven generations of his ancestors).

On the borderland of Sind and Panjab there were five tribes of Baluchis–Mazaris, Bozdars, Bugtis, Waziris and Buldis.

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The Mazaris

The name Mazari is derived from Mazar which in Baluchi language means tiger. The Mazari tribe occupied the southernmost portion of Derah Ghazi Khan district. Their territory was about 65 km long and 32 km broad. Their western boundary touched the hills and the eastern boundary the river Indus. Their capital was Rojhan situated on the western bank of the Indus.

From Mithankot to Shikarpur, on the right bank of the Indus, the land belonged to Mazari tribe of Baluchis. Bahram Khan was chief of the Mazari tribe. The Mazaris plundered travellers and caravans passing through their country. Their raids extended to the villages of Multan and Bahawalpur. They plundered Ibrahim Khan, ambassador of Shah Kamran of Herat on his way back from Ludhiana with presents from the British Government in India.

The Baluchis gave a lot of trouble to the Sikhs government. General Ventura adopted conciliatory measures towards them, and confirmed them in their lands and jagirs. Thus pleased they paid land revenue to the Sikh government. Afterwards Diwan Sawan Mal, Governor of Multan province, introduced cash payments of revenues instead of in kind. This measure created great disaffection among them.

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The Sikh Expeditions

After Dasahra in October, 1824, Ranjit Singh led an expedition down the Indus to reduce the Baluch tribes on the border of Sind. He returned to Lahore at the end of December, 1824. In 1832 General Ventura was sent to annex Sabzalkot and Rojhan, both on the right bank of the Indus below Mithankot. Gardner accompanied him with a park of artillery, 400 *ghorcharhas* or irregular cavalry and 800 regular infantry.

Diwan Sawan Mal built forts at Dajal, Harrand and Amarkot, and garrisoned them well. In 1833 he led an expedition against Bahram Khan, Mazari chief. He was forced to restore the looted property and to pay *nazarana*. But the Mazaris became more aggressive. The Diwan led several expeditions against them. Rojhan, the capital of the Mazari tribe, was occupied. The fort of Kin, situated to the south of Rojhan fell, and the Mazaris were reduced to subjection.

Bozdars: Like the Mazaris the Bozdars were a ferocious Baluchi tribe. The Diwan erected the fort of Mungrota to check their depredations.

Bugtis: Another tribe the Bugtis made onslaughts upto the very wall of Rojhan. The mountain defiles and hill skirts overgrown with brushwood provided them a safe shelter.

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Waziris: There was another tribe of Waziri Pathans. They descended from their hiding places to plunder and seize Hindus and Sikhs for ransom. Sawan Mal paid to their chief, Dost Muhammad Khan, Rs. 200 per mensem to prevent depredations through the passes stretching from Sangarh to Mahoi.

Buldis: They were notorious robbers.

The Places under Sikh Occupation

Ranjit Singh occupied a number of places along the north-western border of Sind. They were as follows:

1. *Bela Dalana*. It was situated 32 km west of Derah Ghazi Khan.

2. *Maujgarh*. It lay under the Sakhi Sarwar hill famous for the mines of Multani *mitti* (clay). It was both white and yellow and was sold at 6 quintals for a rupee. In Delhi its price was Rs. 5 a quintal.

3. *Rajanpur*. It was located about 100 km to the south of Dalana. This region was almost desolate and robbers of Mazari tribe frequented it; but they were afraid of Sikh horsemen. The Mazaris generally fought with swords.

4. *Mithankot*. It was situated 17 km south of Rajanpur with a small military post of 10 Sikhs, though the place was often attacked by Bugti tribe.

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5. *Amarkot*. It was about 28 km south-west of Mithankot. It was the birthplace of Akbar, the great Mughal Emperor. An officer with 50 Sikh soldiers was stationed there.

In July, 1835, a fight had taken place between Bahram Khan and the Sikhs. The chief's mother-in-law Jannat was captured by the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh demanded 25 camels as ransom. Bahram Khan delivered 20 camels at once. On 15 December, 1835, she was escorted to Mithankot, where she was to be released on the receipt of five camels.

In January, 1836, a large force of Bugtis attacked the military post at Amarkot and killed all the Sikhs. The Bugtis lost only two men. They carried away 7,000 cows and sheep of the inhabitants.

In July, 1836, the Mazaris attacked Mithankot, defeated and killed the small Sikh garrison, and plundered the village. In the fight their commander Dost Ali Khan, son of Bahram Khan, the Mazari chief, lost his life.

6. *Rojhan*. It lay 18 km from Amarkot, on the western bank of the Indus. There was no water available to drink on the way except in the villages of Badli and Derah Dildar.

On 4 March, 1836, Mohan Lal came across a place where another fight

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had taken place between the Sikhs and Bugtis. The earth was red with blood. Rags of turbans of the Sikhs lay on all sides on bushes and branches of tamarisk trees. Their fingers which had been cut off for the sake of rings lay scattered all around. The Bugtis, a ferocious Baluch tribe, lived on a hill called Roh or Takkar. The Bugtis possessed large herds of cattle. They lived in small tents called Khirgabs, made of weeds and coarse blankets.

7. *Gotki*. It was situated 10 km from the left bank of the Indus. Hindu Khatris formed the majority of population. Men and women both smoked and drank bhang.

8. *Dajal*. It stood at the mouth of the Chachar Pass, 80 km south of Derah Ghazi Khan town.

9. *Harrand*. It lay at the foot of the Sulaiman hills in Derah Ghazi Khan district. A large fort was built there by Diwan Sawan Mal in 1836.

10. *Sabzal Kot*. It was a frontier post of Sind.

Shikarpur

On the borderland of Sind Ranjit Singh's main objective was Shikarpur. It was situated 40 km north-west of Sukkur. It was a walled city with a circumference of 3,700 metres and eight gates. Its main bazaar was roofed to keep off heat of the sun. There were many orchards in and around it. They yielded a rich crop of dates, mangoes, mulberry and oranges. The population of Shikarpur was about 43,000. The majority was Hindu. Nearly half of them professed Sikh faith as Sahajdharis or followers of Guru Nank. The Muslims were about one-tenth, and they had no fanaticism. The income from land revenue was 2½ lakhs and from duties Rs. 64,000. Shikarpur was under Durranis from 1748 to 1824, when it was captured by the Amirs of Sind.

Shikarpur was renowned for its wealth, bankers and money-dealers. They had connections with Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Khorasan, Turkistan and even Russia, as well as with big cities of India. It was not a city of manufacturers and could not boast of equality in trade with Bahawalpur, Multan or Derah Ghazi Khan. But it was the junction of many trade routes. Shal (Quetta), Qalat, Kandhar, and Nerat were its western marts, and Haidarabad and Bombay were its southern emporia. Thornton says: "Their credit stood so high that their bills were honoured in every part of India and Central and Western Asia from Astracan to Calcutta." About the trade of Shikarpur Postans reported in 1841: Shikarpur received from Karachi, Marwar, Multan, Bahawalpur, Khairpur and Ludhiana European piece-goods, raw-silk, ivory, cochineal, spices,

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coarse cotton cloth, manufactured silk, sugar-candy, coconuts, metals, drugs, indigo, dyes, opium and saffron; from Khorasan and Turkistan; raw silk, fruits, madder, turquoise, antimony, medicinal herbs, sulphur, alum, asafoetida, gums, and horses. The exports to other parts of Sind and Baluchistan were indigo, henna, metals, coarse and fine cloth, European chintzes, manufactured silk, groceries, spices, raw cotton, coarse sugar, opium, and grains. The total revenue amounted to Rs. 71,381 shared between Khairpur and Haidarabad in the ratio of 3:4. Vali Shah was the chief of Shikarpur.

Ranjit Singh tried his best to retain it, but the British Government forced him to relinquish it in 1838 by the Tripartite Treaty.

Diplomatic Relations with Sind

After Ranjit's first expedition to Multan in 1802 the Mirs of Sind realized his rising power, and they entered into correspondence with him in order to win his goodwill. After his conquest of Multan in 1818, they deputed their envoys to his Court and sent him presents regularly. In the winter of 1825, Ranjit Singh sent an agent to the Mirs of Sind demanding tribute from them. The Mirs sent their vakils with some presents to Lahore where they stayed for some time. Afterwards two vakils, one Hindu and the other Muslim permanently lived at the court of Lahore. They received a monthly allowance of Rs. 700 from the Maharaja. In this connection a couple of references are given below:

On 22 May, 1831, the Maharaja granted Rs. 1,000 to Darvesh Muhammad and Asa Nand, vakils of Sind.

On 6 February, 1832, Ranjit Singh asked the Sind vakils, Asa Nand and Darvesh Muhammad, how far was Mithankot "from Shikarpur which belonged to the Maharaja".

In June, 1833, Darvesh Muhammad Khan and Asa Nand presented to the Maharaja six horses sent by the Mirs of Haidarabad, one by Morad Ali Khan, one by Mir Nur Muhammad Khan, one by Nasir Khan, four dogs, a few swords, while garments with 4 horses were sent by Mir Rustam Khan of Khairpur and one sword, one gun and some garments by the Mir of Mirpur.

In January, 1834, a sum of Rs. 550 was granted to Darvesh Muhammad Khan and Asa Nand, as their dues.

On 23 April, 1836, the vakils of Haidarabad presented four horses, two swords, one lancet, twenty-one garments, and two horses sent by Nasir Khan and four hunting dogs, by the third Mir. Asa Nand presented four horses, twenty-one garments, one Persian gun and one lancet on behalf of

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the Mir of Khairpur. The Maharaja granted Rs. 500 as a reward for the presentation of the horses, Rs. 700 as entertainment and 2 suits of clothes to the *khidmatgars* of the horses. He felt greatly pleased on observing the speed of the horses.

On 3 August, 1836, Rs. 700 were granted to Darvesh Muhammad Khan and Asa Nand as their monthly allowance.

Comment

Ranjit Singh had invaded Multan for the first time in 1802. The Mirs of Sind considered it advisable to establish friendly relations with him, and started regular correspondence. He felt interested in its conquest since then. At that time, he was not strong enough to invade it. After the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809, he became anxious to seize it. But somehow or other he required permission of the British to undertake its subjugation. It seems that he considered river Indus after the confluence of Panj Nad at Mithankot upto Arabian sea as river Satluj. In the Treaty of 1809, also he had accepted the whole course of river Satluj from its source in Tibet instead of from Rupar to Firozpur. It was only to the east of this portion of the river that the territories of Phulkian States were situated for the protection of which, the treaty was formed. Whatever the case might be, Ranjit Singh behaved all his life as a vassal of the British Government under the garb of freindship between the two independent dominions. The best time for the conquest of Sind lost for ever, was in the first half of the second decades of the nineteenth century. At that time the British Government of India was involved in Gorkha War with the threat from Pindaris and Marathas culminating in the Third Maratha War. Besides the British authorities at home were neckdeep in Napoleonic War. Thus the Britishers had no time to think of Sind, and it was the golden opportunity for Ranjit Singh. The fact is that the fear of the English tiger had filled his mind. He could never afterwards liberate himself from this fear.

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CHAPTER 13

Ladakh and Iskardu

Ladakh and Iskardu were conquered by Zorawar Singh,
At the behest of his master Raja Gulab Singh;
He extended the Sikh sway over Baltistan or Gilgit,
As well as over Ladakh upto the borders of Tibet.

Ladakh

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Ladakh is a Trans-Himalayan tableland in the higher regions of river Indus. Its eastern border touches the western boundary of Tibet. On the west it has Baltistan better known by the name of its capital Iskardu. It is situated at a height of 14,000 feet, surrounded by lofty mountains varying in height between 25 and 28 thousand feet. Its area in Ranjit Singh's time was about 30,000 square miles. The people were of Mongolian race and Buddhists of Lamaism. Its revenues, generally paid in kind, amounted to five lakhs of rupees. Its trade consisted of shawl wool of the annual value of 2 to 3 lakh rupees. Kotu Mal Shikarpuri banker of Amritsar, advanced this amount to Rasulju Azimju Kashmiri merchants to procure this wool. Ladakh was ruled over by a Ladakhi Buddhist king named Gyalpo.

Shortly after the conquest of Kashmir, its first Governor Diwan Moti Ram sent agents to Leh to demand tribute from Gyalpo, because he had been a tributary to the Afghan Governors of Kashmir. The king readily agreed and paid the amount which was then due from him. It was impressed upon the king to pay his tribute punctually and regularly, which he did upto 1834. The tribute generally consisted of a yak, a sheep, a goat, a dog and a few more valuable things.

Ladakh had no political connection either with China or Tibet, except that it had common religion, language and way of life with the latter.

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Moorcroft's Intrigues

Moorcroft was the superintendent of the military stud of the East India Company. He was fond of travelling. He obtained the British Government's approval to study the position of Russian advance into Turkistan towards India. With a British passport he came to Ludhiana and secured Ranjit Singh's permission to visit Kashmir and Ladakh. He was accompanied by George Trebeck. His main object was to collect information geographical, economic, political and military of the countries of his visit for the use of British Government.

In 1820, he travelled by the Kulu route via Bora Lacha Pass, and reached Leh in October. He wanted to go to Yarkand, but the Chinese government refused him permission. He stayed in Ladakh for a year and a half outwardly to establish commercial relations between the Ladakh Government and the East India Company.

Moorcroft encouraged Gyalpo to stop paying tribute to Kashmir and seek British protection. He forwarded the Raja's application to the British Resident at Delhi. On Ranjit Singh's complaint he was informed that Moorcroft had done so in his personal capacity and not under the authority of the Government of India.

In 1834, Dr. Henderson, disguised as a Mulsim under the assumed name of Ismail Khan reached Leh, capital of Ladakh. At that time Zorawar Singh had caputred western provinces of Suru and Dras and had entered the valley of Paskyum.

Gyalpo tried to seek British protection through Henderson. Zorawar Singh reported his presence to Ranjit Singh. He referred the matter to his agent at Ludhiana. The Maharaja was assured that Henderson had gone there without the permission of British Government and he was immediately recalled.

Gulab Singh's Annexation of Ladakh, 1834-35

Gulab Singh was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Governor of Jammu. He had established his authority in the east over Kishtwar and on the south-west in the lower parts of Kashmir inhabited by Dhund, Sudhan, Sathi and Murdial tribes. He was intent on having the Kashmir valley also under him. He felt that the Maharaja would not allow him to do so. In 1834, without informing Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he ordered General Zorawar Singh Kahluria, his deputy-governor of Kishtwar, to annex Ladakh to the state of Jammu, and separate it from Kashmir. The Governor of Kashmir was Prince Sher Singh. He was so much sunk in sloth and sensuality that he spared not even an hour in twenty-four hours to attend

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to administration. He was most anxious to win over the Dogra Rajas to his side in the forthcoming struggle for the throne. He transferred the districts of Banihal and Muru Wardwan southward of Pir Panjal range from Kashmir to Jammu. When Ranjit Singh came to know of it, they were reverted to Kashmir.

Zorawar Singh at the head of troops marched from Kishtwar where he was the governor. He passed through the Suru valley to Ladakh. Zorawar Singh instructed his troops not to damage the houses and the crops of poor Ladakhis. The advance guard under Mehta Basti Ram fought against the Ladakhis and a large number of men were taken prisoners at Paskyum. The Gyalpo of Ladakh sent his envoy to the camp of Zorawar Singh to offer his submission and asking for terms. Negotiations continued for four months. Eventually Gyalpo agreed to pay Rs. 50,000 as the cost of war and an annual tribute of Rs. 20,000. A fort was built outside the city of Leh for a military post. Dalel Singh was appointed thanadar of the Lahore Durbar. H.M. Lawrence says that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was informed about the conquest of Ladakh on the return of Zorawar Singh in 1835.

On 16 March, 1836, in the town of Jandiala, Zorawar Singh of Tibet presented to the Maharaja some 'Gont' horses and 40 'Harzarjo'. He said that on the conquest of Ladakh lakhs of rupees had to be spent; but the Raja Kalan brought it into Maharaja's possession without any fighting or warfare.

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After sometime the Raja fled to British territory, and petitioned for asylum in Bushahar or in any other hill state. He was permitted to reside anywhere on the condition that he would not indulge in any political or military activity to recover his lost possessions. The Raja settled down in Spiti.

In October, 1837, the Raja of Bushahar lodged a complaint with the British political agent at Subathu that Raja Gulab Singh's forces were pursuing the son of the deposed Raja of Ladakh. They had reached river Satluj and had imprisoned two men of Bushahar State. The Subathu agent wrote to Wade to take up the matter with Ranjit Singh. Wade instructed Lieutenant Mackeson, the British Agent at Lahore Durbar, to request Ranjit Singh to recall his troops from the borders of Bushahar state and to release the two detained Bushaharis.

Raja Dhian Singh deputed Devi Singh to Bushahar inviting Raja's agent to Lahore. The Raja's representative presented on 5 February, 1838, to Ranjit Singh a horse, five bags of musk and five shawls from his master. The messenger received a *Khilat* for the raja and a pair of shawls

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for himself. Wade interpreted Dhian Singh's action as an attempt to bring Bushahar's Cis-Satluj territory under the Lahore Durbar.

The British Government granted asylum to the ex-Raja of Ladakh and his son at Kotgarh, rented a house for them at Rs. 800 per annum, and a monthly allowance of Rs. 200 for their maintenance. The Raja died at Kotgarh in 1838.

Baltistan or Iskardu or Little Tibet

Baltistan also called Gilgit is situated to the west of Ladakh. The population is Muslim of Shia sect of Islam. Ahmad Shah was the ruler. Moorcroft was staying in Ladakh in 1820-22 to watch Russian activities on its northern borders. He encouraged the rulers of Ladakh and Iskardu to seek British protection against the Sikhs. Moorcroft's letter addressed to Ahmad Shah fell into the hands of an officer of the Lahore Durbar posted at Leh, capital of Ladakh, to realize tribute from its king. He forwarded it to Maharaja Ranjit Singh who sent it to the British agent at Ludhiana without any complaint or comment. Moorcroft sent a copy of it to Iskardu. Ahmad Shah showed a keen desire to be under British protection.

In 1831 the French traveller Jacquemont visited Kashmir. Ahmad Shah took him as a British agent, and sent him a messenger offering his master's submission. Jacquemont put him off.

On his return to Lahore, Ranjit Singh asked Jacquemont if he should conquer Tibet. Jacquemont replied that the Maharaja could do so only with his Gorkha regiment, but the country was extremely poor. Ranjit Singh replied that he was not interested in an indigent land.

After the fall of Ladakh, Ahmad Shah, the reigning prince of Iskardu saw the storm gradually advancing towards him. Vigne's visit to Iskardu in 1835 was highly acceptable. Ahmad Shah wanted British protection. For this purpose he sent his confidential servant with Vigne to bring a reply to his application for aid from the Governor-General.

The British Government's policy was to maintain friendly understanding with Iskardu without raising any hope of British connection. In May, 1836, the Secretary to the Government of India informed Wade to follow this line of policy.

Zorawar Singh captured Iskardu in 1840 and Garo in 1841.

Comment

Annexation of Ladakh and Iskardu to Ranjit Singh's kingdom was brought about by Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu through his Deputy

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Zorawar Singh Kahluria. The countries were poor, but their great importance lay in their strategic situation. They were surrounded by six countries of Panjab, British India, Tibet, China, Russian Turkistan and Afghanistan.

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Part Two

Relations with Neighbours and Others

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I. The British (chapters 14 to 18)
II. Afghanistan and Others (chapter 19)

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CHAPTER 14

Friendship, 1800-1806

Ranjit Singh's whole reign was one sleepless night,
The British policy of absorption gave him fright;
Starting from friendship he ended in vassalage,
And died in vain glory but real bondage.

1. Yusaf Ali's Embassy, 1800

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Ranjit Singh's soft attitude towards Shah Zaman during his invasion, 1798-99, and the receipt of a *khilat* from the Shah, greatly perturbed Lord Wellesley, the British Governor-General at Calcutta. By 1799 the British authority had been firmly established upto the Ganga. Wellesley was planning to capture Delhi and to bring Emperor Shah Alam II under his control. Wellesley expected a fresh irruption of Shah Zaman. He wanted to form an alliance with Maharaja Ranjit Singh in order to confine Shah Zaman to the West Panjab. Shah Alam II had been inviting Shah Zaman to come to Delhi. He even promised to the Shah a couple of young princesses in marriage. To prevent Ranjit Singh from giving any help to Shah Zaman, and to get the news about Shah Zaman was the British aim. The British Resident at the court of Sindhia deputed Yusaf Ali to Lahore. Yusaf Ali was accompanied by another confidential newswriter named Kaura Mal. They met the Sikh chiefs of the Cis-Satluj region and obtained letters of introduction for Ranjit Singh.

In October, 1800, Ranjit Singh met Yusaf Ali and others in a private meeting at Amritsar. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia and two other sardars were present. Yusaf Ali was asked to explain his real object. He replied that the Governor-General wished that the Maharaja would not form an alliance with Shah Zaman. Ranjit Singh replied that a *khilat* had already

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been received from Shah Zaman and his vakils were there negotiating an alliance. Yusaf Ali was asked to meet him again at Lahore.

Meanwhile Daulat Rao Sindhia's secret agents arrived at Lahore with presents and a letter warning him against British intention and not to allow Yusaf Ali to collect secretly his political, military and financial position.

The Maharaja received Yusaf Ali at Lahore on 17 October, 1800, in a public durbar. It took Yusaf Ali nearly two hours to read letters brought by him. On 18 October, Yusaf Ali met Sada Kaur. Ranjit Singh detained him till 9 May, 1801. The last meeting was held at Ramnagar on the banks of river Chenab. The Maharaja told him that the question of forming an alliance did not arise because Shah Zaman was no longer in power and had been thrown out by Shah Mahmud. Ranjit Singh gave him a letter for Collins agent at the court of Sindhia. The Maharaja wrote:

> "I therefore now become your friend by correspondence, cherish the continuation of this amicable intercourse and detain Mir Yusaf Ali Khan with me, while at the same time, I apprise you that Zaman Shah is the enemy to the lives and property of both your government and mine, and meditates the ruin of both states."

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2. Holkar-Lake-Ranjit Singh Episode, 1805-6

Holkar came to seek Sikh aid,
Of Lake in pursuit he was afraid.
Ranjit Singh harmonised each side,
And let them depart in peace and pride.

The Cis-Satluj Region or Sirhind Province

In 1764 the Dal Khalsa conquered the Sirhind province or the Cis-Satluj region lying between rivers Satluj and Yamuna. Here numerous Sikh sardars, big and small, had established themselves as rulers, all independent of one another. Among the big states which had struck roots there a little earlier were Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kaithal. The other estates included Ambala, Anandpur, Baddowal, Bhadaur, Bharatgarh, Bhareli, Buria, Chamkaur, Chhalaundi, Dharamkot, Faridkot, Firozpur, Ghungrana, Jagadhri, Kalaur, Kalsia, Khanna, Kot Kapura, Ladwa, Machhiwara, Malaud, Morindah, Nagla, Naraingarh, Radaur, Rupar, Shahabad Markanda, Shahzadpur, Talwandi, Thanesar, Wadni and Zira. Three estates of Kunjpura, Malerkotla and Raekot were under Muslim chiefs.

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The Cis-Satluj region, has always been of great strategic importance. It provided an essential link between Delhi on the one hand, and Lahore, Multan, Kabul, Kandhar and Kashmir on the other. All the military and commercial routes from the north-west to the imperial capitals of Delhi and Agra, and rich cities of Uttar Pradesh and Bengal passed through it. It was for this reason that the most decisive battles of India were fought here right from the time of Mahabharat to modern times. In the beginning of the nineteenth century this area was coveted by Marathas, the British, George Thomas and Ranjit Singh. Its western part was called Malwa, and eastern part Haryana.

British Contact with the Sikhs

At the end of the eighteenth century Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General of British India, was engaged in the second Maratha War. Delhi, the capital of the dying Mughal Empire, was in possession of Daulat Rao Sindhia. Lord Lake was fighting with him. On 2 August, 1803, Lord Wellesley wrote to Lord Lake to win over Sikh chiefs of the Sirhind province and to wean them away from the influence of Marathas. Lord Lake addressed letters to all the Sikh sardars including Ranjit Singh not to give any help to Sindhia.

The Maharaja replied that he was ready to cooperate with the British if "they would accept him as the sovereign of all the Sikh chiefs westwards of Sutlej".[1] This was a fatal step as by it he had surrendered his claim to the Cis-Satluj region upto the Yamuna. Had he not done so, he would have possessed Himachal Pradesh, Jalalabad province of Afghanistan and the whole of Sind upto the Arabian Sea.

The British conquered Delhi on 11 September, 1803. Emperor Shah Alam II became their protege. Archibald Seton was appointed Resident at Delhi. He took possession of crownlands which supported the Mughal Emperor and the royal family. They were situated in the Upper Ganga Doab and southern parts of Haryana, including Delhi-Panipat area, Palwal, Firozpur Jhirka and Rewari. The Sikh sardars and rajas were treated as independent chiefs.

Sir George Campbell who served as a deputy commissioner in the Sirhind province says:

> The victory of the British at Delhi in 1803 did not give them any territory north of the capital, as they were occupied mostly by the Sikhs who were not under the Marathas.

[1]NAI, Foreign Department, Secret Consultations, 2 March, 1804, nos. 26-27 and no. 152, in M.L. Ahluwalia's *Select Documents*, p. lvi and B.J. Hasrat, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, p. 41.

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Lieutenant Colonel David Ochterlony

Lord Lake was in charge of the Maratha campaign in Northern India. Under him were Lieutenant Colonels Ochterlony, Burne and Brick. Ochterlony was at Delhi, Brick at Panipat and Burne in the Saharanpur-Muzaffarnagar area in the Ganga Doab.

On 20 February, 1804, Ochterlony suggested to the Governor-General that the Sirhind province worth Rs. forty lakhs annually should be entrusted to a couple of Sikh chiefs on payment of half the revenues as tribute to the British Government. On 26 February, 1804, Lord Lake warned Bhag Singh of Jind and Bhanga Singh of Thanesar against joining the other Sikh sardars in their anti-British activities in the Ganga Doab. Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal was the first Sikh sardar to join the British camp. Raja Bhag Singh of Jind followed him. On 18 December, 1804, the Sikhs were defeated by Burne. Sher Singh of Buria, nephew of Rae Singh of Jagadhri, lost his life. Ochterlony sent Lal Singh and Bhag Singh to assist Burne in clearing the Doab of the Sikh raiders. They joined Burne's camp on 26 January, 1805.

Mahraja Ranjit Singh

On 18 December, 1804, Ochterlony informed the Governor-General that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was near river Satluj at the head of 10,000 cavalry and was planning to capture the territory of Rani Nurulnisa of Raekot-Ludhiana-Jagraon area. Two days later he again wrote that Ranjit Singh would subdue all the Cis-Satluj chiefs. He proposed that Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala should be helped by a British force in driving away Ranjit Singh across river Satluj. On 13 January, 1805, Lord Wellesley informed Ochterlony that he should not plan annexation of the whole Cis-Satluj region at that stage. He advised Ochterlony to establish friendly contacts with all the Cis-Satluj chiefs, and occasionally reward their services.

Karnal Captured, 6 April, 1805

On 27 January, 1805, Ochterlony wrote to the Governor-General that Gurdit Singh of Ladwa was the leader of anti-British Sikh sardars who were plundering Upper Ganga Doab. He should be punished by seizing his district of Karnal and Jhinjhina in Saharanpur district. He explained that Karnal town occupied a central place among the Sikh states. It lay 60 km from Kaithal, 100 km from Jind, 80 km from Ambala, 90 km from Patiala, 35 km from Thanesar, 55 km from Shahabad, 125 km from Delhi and 75 km from Meerut. It would serve as an advance military post of the

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British in the north. They could easily check the crossing of river Yamuna by the Sikhs into the Ganga Doab, would control the Sikh chiefs and could restrain Ranjit Singh. In mid-February, 1805, Ranjit Singh sent messages to all the Sikh sardars to declare themselves in his favour, in order to form a united Sikh state. On 15 February, 1805, Ochterlony instructed Burne to get ready to seize Karnal. Burne besieged it on 5 April, 1805, and captured it on 6 April. Taraori was seized on 9 April, 1805. By June, 1805, all the Sikh sardars of the Cis-Satluj region agreed to remain on friendly terms with the British Government.

Ranjit Singh at Hardwar

In April, 1805, Ranjit Singh attended the fair at Hardwar on the Ganga and returned from there in the beginning of May, 1805. The rainy months of July-September were spent in farming out several districts to the highest bidders. Being engaged in frequent warfare, he did not like to have the whole administration in his own hands. He devoted his entire energy in two directions–maintenance of law and order and making new conquests. The sardars were invested with "full powers even of life and death".

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Jaswant Rao Holkar's March towards the Panjab, 1805

Jaswant Rao Holkar of Indore had been defeated in a number of engagements during the Second Anglo-Maratha War. He fled to Rajasthan to seek help from Rajput princes. Having failed in this attempt, he turned towards the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs, Ranjit Singh of Lahore and Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk of Kabul. Jaswant Rao Holkar had with him about 12,000 cavalry, 3,000 infantry and 30 guns. He was accompanied by the well-known Pindari leader Amir Khan.[1] Lord Lake was proceeding to check his advance. Lake arrived at Delhi on 25 October, 1805. With five regiments of cavalry and four battalions of infantry, Lake set out in pursuit of Holkar.

Change in British Policy

The Directors of East India Company in London did not approve of

[1]Amir Khan was a Pathan adventurer. He was born of poor parents in the north of Rohilkhand. He began his career as a private horseman in 1788. After serving some chiefs he joined Jaswant Rao Holkar and remained with him till 1818. He took a conspicuous part in the wars of Northern and Central India. In 1818 during the Third Maratha War he was won over by the British under a guarantee of holding his possession undisturbed. They were worth about 30 lakhs per annum. After this he retired from political and military life, and became a quiet and peaceful ruler. (*Adventures of An Officer*, I, 10n)

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Lord Wellesley's aggressive policy of expansion of British territory. Wellesley was recalled and Cornwallis was sent as Governor-General of India with instructions to pursue a policy of peace. He died soon after his arrival in India on 5 October, 1805. Sir George Barlow, the seniormost member of Governor-General's Council, took charge of administration. He issued instructions to Lord Lake to settle terms with Jaswant Rao Holkar.

The Patiala Affair

Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala was an imbecile. He had succeeded to the throne in 1781 at the age of six. Sahib Singh's grandmother Rani Hukman managed the state affairs during his minority for sometime. She died shortly afterwards of anxiety, worry and despair. Rani Rajindar Kanwar, a Patiala princess, married at Phagwara, took Rani Hukman's place in saving the State from disintegration. Sahib Singh ill-treated her, and she died of disgrace and humiliation in 1791. Then Sahib Singh's elder sister, Sahib Kanwar, 18-year-old married lady, came on the scene. She proved a brilliant administrator, great general and successful negotiator. Sahib Singh and his wife Rani As Kaur, turned against Sahib Kanwar. She was imprisoned in the fort of Patiala. She escaped, but was captured and confined in the fort of Bhawanigarh, where most probably she was murdered in 1799 at the age of 26. Now Sahib Singh fell under the influence of his stepmoher Rani Khem Kaur.

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This was deeply resented by As Kaur, an energetic lady of great enterprise. As Kaur was the daughter of Gurdas Singh of village Chattah and was married to Sahib Singh in 1792. In 1797 she gave birth to a son, heir apparent, Karam Singh. She claimed her right to be consulted in state matters. Besides she felt that her son's interests were not safe in Rani Khem Kaur's hands. As Kaur retired to her jagir at Amargarh, 40 km north-west of Patiala. Sahib Singh marched to Amargarh and encamped at Mansurpur, 6 km from Amargarh. As Kaur made a sudden dash upon Patiala, captured the fort and secured submission of the city and all the civil and military officers.

Sahib Singh came back and encamped at Sanaur, 3 km from Patiala. He sought help from all the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs against his rebellious wife. The Rani won over the Raja of Nabha by surrendering under her seal and signature the village of Doladhi, 2 km south-east of Nabha town, which had been a bone of contention between Patiala and Nabha. Jaswant Singh, the Raja of Nabha, promised military help to the Rani. Sahib Singh retired to Saifabad. This position continued upto October, 1805.

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Jaswant Rao Holkar at Patiala

Jaswant Rao sent one vakil to Patiala to meet Sahib Singh. The other vakil went to Amritsar to wait upon Ranjit Singh. The third vakil made his way towards Shikarpur in Sind where Shuja-ul-Mulk was then staying.

Sahib Singh decided to join Holkar. He sent his vakil to Holkar with a *nazar* of 2 gold coins, 4 guns and 500 silken turbans. Rani As Kaur ordered her people not to sell any grain or other foodstuff to Holkar's troops without her permission. Only Karam Singh of Shahbad and Bhanga Singh of Thanesar supported Sahib Singh for an alliance with Holkar. All other Sikh chiefs were in favour of the British. On 11 October, 1805, Lake's letter was delivered to Sahib Singh saying that he would soon reach Patiala. On 15 October, Holkar's agents arrived at Saifabad. Sahib Singh asked them to persuade Holkar to restore him in possession of the fort and city of Patiala which were held by his wife.

A couple of days later Holkar encamped about 8 km from Patiala. Rani As Kaur sent Rs. 20,000, two horses and some other valuable gifts to Holkar. Holkar's agents demanded from Sahib Singh 10 lakhs of rupees for their army's expenses. The Raja paid 2 lakhs as the first instalment. Holkar sent a messenger to the Rani to hand over fort and the city to the Raja immediately or face war. The Rani accepted the challenge and got ready to fight. Holkar badly needed funds to support his army, and he fleeced money from both the Raja and the Rani, and a deadlock continued for three weeks. Holkar said to Amir Khan: "God has assuredly given us two pigeons to pluck; do you take up the cause of one while I take up with the other".[1]

Major-General Dodwell serving under Lord Lake sent a letter drafted by his political Assistant, 20 year-old, Charles Metcalfe, warning Raja Sahib Singh against supporting Holkar. Sahib Singh was already fed up with excessive demands for money by Holkar and for his failure to restore Patiala to him. He persuaded Holkar to seek help from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Knowing that British forces were advancing in pursuit of him, Holkar raised his camp and crossed river Satluj on 13 November, 1805.

Lord Lake's March to River Beas

The Raja and Rani made a compromise, and Sahib Singh came to his capital. They received Lord Lake at Patiala on 30 November, 1805. Lake's army guided by Bhag Singh of Jind crossed river Satluj at Ludhiana on 5-7 December. Holkar crossed river Beas on 8 December.

[1]Baswan Lal, *Memoirs of Amir Khan*, 276.

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Lake was 50 km behind Holkar. Lake encamped on the southern bank of river Beas on 9 December near village Chakoki at Rajghat situated 55 km from Amritsar and 72 km from Ludhiana.

Raja Bhag Singh Deputed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Raja Bhag Singh of Jind was in Lake's camp. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was his sister's son and had arrived at Amritsar from Jhang. Lake deputed Bhag Singh to dissuade his nephew from joining Holkar. Ranjit Singh invited all the Trans-Satluj Sikh chiefs to join him at Amritsar. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala was already with him. Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law Rani Sada Kaur was at his beck and call. None else responded to his invitation. All others were in direct communication with Lake. In the conference it was decided to give no aid to Holkar.

Ranjit Singh sent his agents to Holkar and Lake conveying his regards. Ranjit Singh received Holkar at Amritsar. Holkar visited Durbar Sahib and made an offering of Rs. 2,000 at Hari Mandar. Both took an oath of lasting friendship in the Hari Mandar before the holy *Granth* and exchanged turbans. G.S. Sardesai says that Ranjit Singh visited Lake's camp in disguise, and made an agreement with Lake and Malcolm not to support Holkar.

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Why Ranjit Singh Decided to Remain Friendly with the British

1. Ranjit Singh dreaded the discipline and determination of the British army, which he had seen in disguise in Lake's camp on the Beas.
2. He had seen the hordes of Holkar's soldiers flying before a few English trained regiments.
3. Ranjit Singh had been advised by his maternal uncle Bhag Singh of Jind not to open hostilities against the English.
4. He knew that the British possessed the whole of India minus Panjab, and that all the Indian powers had fallen before them.
5. His authority had not been established over the whole of Panjab, and his resources were meagre.
6. Many of his subdued chiefs were offering submission to the British, and they were not loyal to him.
7. Ranjit Singh was highly superstitious. He placed two pieces of paper bearing the words Holkar and Lake rolled up before the holy *Granth*. A little child was brought to pick up one paper. It bore Lake's name.
8. Ranjit Singh also realized that in permitting Holkar to stay in Panjab, Lord Lake would advance to fight him. In that event his country would become a battlefield. It would result in misery to the people and in

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his own unpopularity.

9. His supporters, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia and Rani Sada Kaur, favoured conciliation between the two parties.

Due to all these considerations, Ranjit Singh decided to remain friendly with the British. He pleaded with Holkar to give up his opposition to the British and suggested peaceful settlement. Holkar realized that he should not expect any military and financial help from the Cis-Satluj Sikhs, and Ranjit Singh. He had received no response from Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk. His own troops favoured ending hostilities and making peace. Only Amir Khan showed unwillingness. Holkar asked Ranjit Singh to negotiate a settlement.

Ranjit Singh sent his emissary Fatah Singh Ahluwalia with Bhag Singh as his representatives to Lake. They arrived in Lake's camp on the Beas on 19 December, 1805.

Holkar sells His Golden Elephant

Holkar thought that Ranjit Singh's financial position was poor, and it was for this reason that he had advised him to make peace with the British Government. To ascertain the actual position he offered to sell to the Maharaja a golden elephant weighing 50 kg. Ranjit Singh guessed his idea and said this could be purchased by many Baniyas in his state. He referred Holkar to contact Rama Nand Sahu of Amritsar. The price being settled Rama Nand asked Holkar's messengers in which coin they wanted payment, Muhammad Shahi or East India Company's or Nanakshahi. The amount was paid in Muhammadshahi gold coins at once.

Treaty of Rajghat on the Beas

The draft of a treaty was prepared by Lake on 24 December, 1805, on the following terms:

1. Holkar renounced his rights to his territories situated to the north and to the west of river Chambal, and all claims on Pune and Bundelkhand.

2. Lake on behalf of the British Government confirmed him in his possessions lying to the south and east of river Chambai, and undertook not to interfere in those territories.

3. Holkar's territories situated to the south of river Narbada were restored to him, excepting the forts of Ambar, Chanderi and Shivgaon.

4. Holkar undertook not to employ any European in his service without British Government's approval, and to discard completely any contact with Sarza Rao Ghatge, General of Daulat Rao Sindhia.

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5. Holkar would return by a particular route specified by Lake.

6. During his return journey Holkar would not cause any damage or destruction in the territories of Cis-Satluj chiefs.

(*Note:* Sir George Barlow also restored to Holkar later on Rampura, Tonk and the territory of North Bundi hills.)

The draft of the treaty was given to Holkar by Ranjit Singh and Bhag Singh for consideration and for his seal and signature. Jaswant Rao Holkar delayed acceptance of the terms. Lake got ready to fight, and reached Goindwal Ghat on 5 January, 1806. Lake's determination forced Holkar to affix his signature and seal on the morning of 7 January, 1806. In the afternoon the same day the treaty was presented to Lake at a formal ceremony. Thorn, an eyewitness, thus describes the scene:

> On the right of his Lordship were seated several of the Sikh chiefs, whose joy at the event was visibly marked in their countenances, and on his left were Col. Malcolm and the vakils of Holkar. A silk bag was first presented, containing a letter from Holkar, expressive of his pacific disposition, the sincerity of his professions, and his desire to live in amity with the English Government. After the reading of this, the treaty itself, signed and sealed by Holkar, was delivered to the General, at which instant a royal salute was fired, and Lake declared that as the British Government never violated any of its engagements, the continuance of peace would depend upon themselves.

Charles Metcalfe visited Holkar's camp on 10 January and gave him a copy bearing Lord Lake's seal and signature. Lake returned to Delhi on 15 January, 1806. Holkar after visiting Jawalamukhi and Kangra recrossed river Satluj on 16 March, 1806, and proceeded to Indore via Rohtak and Jaipur.

His parting advice to Ranjit Singh was to keep the treasury under his own control, to have trained and drilled regiments like him, and to remain on good terms with the British Government.

First Anglo-Sikh Treaty, 1st January, 1806

Bhag Singh and Fatah Singh asked Lake for another treaty with the Sikhs, to assure them of British goodwill. Fatah Singh and Bhag Singh signed it on behalf of Ranjit Singh while Lieutenant-Colonel John Malcolm represented the British Government. The following were its terms:

1. The Sikhs would force Holkar to remove his army 100 km from

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Amritsar towards the East.

2. The Sikhs would have no communication whatsoever with Holkar and Amir Khan afterwards.

3. The Sikhs would not molest any followers of Holkar who wished to go home to the Deccan, but would help them to leave their territory in peace.

4. The British Government agreed that in case of peace settlement between the British and Holkar, and the latter's removal of his camp 100 km distant from Amritsar, the British force under Lake would withdraw from its position on the Beas towards their own territory.

5. If Ranjit Singh and Fatah Singh would refrain from holding any communications with the enemies of the British Government, or from committing any aggression against the British Government, "the British armies shall never enter the territories of the said chieftains, nor will the British Government form any plans for the seizure or sequestration of their possessions or property".

Appreciation of Bhag Singh's Services

Lake acknowledged Bhag Singh's services. With the approval of the Governor-General the Raja was granted as a life tenure the parganah of Bowana near Panipat, village Mamrezpur in parganah Hansi and village Thana Kalan in parganah Kharkhaudah.

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Praise for Lake's Army

Giani Gian Singh's admiration for the British troops under Lord Lake knew no bounds. This was based upon the various assertions of Sikh Jat zamindars of Malwa, through whose villages Lake had passed. On seeing the British troops, fair coloured, tall, strong, neat, well dressed, well armed, absolutely silent, marching in file, the villagers were wonder-struck. In their camps they paid for everything purchased and for any service rendered. The zamindars who had sustained any loss of crops along the road were given compensation at once in the camp.

Gian Singh compares the armies of the Mughals, Afghans, Marathas and the Sikhs. They laid waste all the cultivation for about 30 km on each side of the road. Wherever they passed, they brought about the crack of doom (*parlai ka rang, qahar ka dhang*). When in any house they found foodstuff or fodder, the family members were at once deprived of them. Not to speak of any price, even the cloth or vessels in which the articles were kept, were not returned. The people called them an embodiment of atrocity (*zulm ki surat*) and a host of angels of death (*Jam ki Jamaat*).

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"Similar was the condition of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army", says Gian Singh.

All the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs exclaimed:
Blessed be the country where such virtuous rulers exist! Will God ever give us such sovereigns?

Comment

Basawan Lal, Naib Munshi of Amir Khan, says, all were happy in Holkar's camp. Jaswant Rao considered the Treaty a Godsend. He was glad that his ancestral state of Indore had been saved. His troops were tired of constant fighting, and expressed their joy in observing a week's holiday. Amir Khan was sullen and sulky, as he wished for more adventures upto Kabul. Bhag Singh of Jind was glad and gay as he had won approbation and goodwill of the British Government. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia had sown the seed which bore fruit later on when his own state of Kapurthala had been saved by the intervention of British Political Agent at Ludhiana from absorption by the Lord of Lahore. As for Ranjit Singh, he came out of this affair as an astute diplomat. He had seen the military might of the British in Lake's camp in disguise. This led him to desist from any provocation against them. He had secured acknowledgement from the British as an independent sovereign of the Panjab west of the Satluj. Further he had obtained a guarantee that the British troops would never enter his territory without any provocation. If he had persisted a little more, he might have extracted acknowledgement of his supremacy over the Cis-Satluj Sikh states. But this was not going to be owing to his infatuation of Moran. Ranjit Singh's extravagant passion for Moran had continued unabated since 1802. According to contemporary Amar Nath:

Dad-e-ashiqi dadand, wa dame az aghosh-e-aqdas riha na farmudah azan zohrah-e-falak fareb taranaha-e-mauzun me shanidand.
(Discharged the duties of a lover, even for a moment would not leave her from his embraces, and listened to her heavenly music.)

In fact Ranjit Singh had lost himself in the magical charm of this young girl.

Flowers of the bush please the eye,
Flowers of flesh intoxicate the soul;
Flowers of the bush are short lived,

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and fade away soon.
Flowers of flesh, grow, shine,
and decline like the moon.

Holi of 1806

On the peaceful settlement of the serious conflict between Jaswant Rao Holkar and the British Government through his efforts, Ranjit Singh celebrated the Holi festival in March, 1806, with great rejoicing and indulgence. "Ranjit Singh's excesses at this festival produced a disease which confined him for four months".[1]

This is confirmed by Ranjit Singh's court chronicler, Sohan Lal Suri who says that in 1806 Maharaja Ranjit Singh suffered from gonorrhoea.[2]

Ranjit Singh is not to be wholly blamed for his frivolous orgies for three reasons. Firstly, he strictly confined these activities to courtesans only. Secondly, though he lived with Moran openly and treated her as a concubine, or kept other girls, he never brought anyone of them into the palace. He went and lived in their homes in the red light area. Thus he preserved the sanctity of his home. Thirdly, study the private life of any great man of the world, in any field of human activity, kings, queens, generals, conquerors, eminent men of art, letters, science, or religion, etc. you will find them belonging to two categories, one given to excessive libido and indulgence, and others who sublimated their sex instinct and attained the heights of supermen. Only strongly sexed persons have made some original contribution to world's civilization. No hermaphrodite or a person lacking in sexual vigour has achieved anything remarkable. But it must not be forgotten that a bad deed never bears a good fruit, and its result will be definitely bad, harmful and even ruinous, in course of time.

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[1]Prinsep, 46.
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CHAPTER 15

Treaty of Amritsar, 1809

Ranjit Singh invaded Sirhind province thrice,
He gave each sardar a territorial slice.
The Sikh chiefs sought British intervention,
The Maharaja was forced to accept Amritsar convention.
Instead from Rupar to Mamdot,
Accepted boundary from Kailash to Mithankot.
Thereby he lost Shimla Hills and Bahawalpur,
A part of Sind including Shikarpur.

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Gurmata

Ranjit Singh did not call *Gurmata* at any time during his life. He generally followed his own decisions, which he submitted to his private council. It consisted of five persons:

Diwan Mohkam Chand, Faqir Aziz-ud-din, Mian Imam-ud-din, his mother-in-law Sada Kaur, his maternal uncle Raja Bhag Singh of Jind and Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala.

The Cis-Satluj Sikh Chiefs Under Maratha Domination

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, George Thomas, an Irish adventurer, had carved out for himself an independent state in Western Haryana with his capital at Hansi. He tried to establish his supremacy over the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs.

Delhi-Agra-Gwalior region was then under Daulat Rao Sindhia. His deputy, the French General Perron, was at Delhi. The Sikh chiefs sought Perron's assistance against Thomas and agreed to pay him Rs. 50,000 per mensem for six months as military charges. (*PRC*, IX, 30.) He deputed his lieutenant Louis Bourquin who defeated and drove away Thomas after

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four months' fighting on 1 January, 1802. Perron's plan was to bring Cis-Satluj chiefs under his master Daulat Rao Sindhia. For that purpose he sought Ranjit Singh's help. He sent his agent Sadasukh to Lahore. Sometime afterwards Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, was persuaded to contact his nephew for establishing friendship and assuring help in extending his power upto Attock. Just then the second Maratha War began. Delhi fell to the British in September, 1803. The Maratha influence in the Cis-Satluj region came to an end. Raja Bhag Singh of Jind and Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal went over to the British, and became their henchmen. (*PRC*, IX, 34, 46A.)

Ranjit Singh's First Cis-Satluj Campaign, 26 July to 10 November, 1806

On the departure of Lord Lake from Panjab the dispute between Raja Sahib Singh and Rani As Kaur arose again. The Rani remained in control of Patiala, and Raja Sahib Singh lived at Sunam. Bhai Tara Singh, thanadar of Mansurpur, a Patiala village, situated about 2 km north-west of Nabha, was murdered. As Kaur suspected complicity of Jaswant Singh, the raja of Nabha. She reached Mansurpur, defeated the combined forces of Nabha and Jind, and occupied Doladhi village lying 2.5 km from Nabha, as a punishment. Raja Bhag Singh requested Ranjit Singh to help Nabha in getting back that village in return for a *nazarana* of Rs. 50,000. The Maharaja warmly welcomed this opportunity. In spite of the two flooded rivers on his way, he rushed to Patiala with lightning speed (*basurat-e-barq*). He crossed river Satluj on 26 July, 1806, and reached Nabha on 28 July. Doladhi village was given to Nabha. Sahib Singh joined As Kaur in capturing the village. They were repulsed.

A conference was held to settle the question of Doladhi village finally. It was attended by chiefs of Jind, Kaithal, Kapurthala, Ladwa, Nabha, Patiala, Thanesar, and several minor sardars. Ranjit Singh acted as its chairman. On listening to the statements of all present there, Doladhi was restored to Patiala. Jaswant Singh of Nabha paid the Maharaja Rs. 50,000, 2 elephants, 100 horses and 1 cannon. Bhag Singh gave him 2 elephants.

In September, 1806, when Ranjit Singh was free from Patiala turmoil, Bhag Singh led him to visit his birthplace at Badrukhan. Ranjit Singh took bath in the holy tank at Thanesar.

On Ranjit Singh's arrival close to Karnal, the British authorities were alarmed. The Resident at Delhi called for an explanation from Raja Bhag Singh. He assured him that the Maharaja had come to settle the dispute over Doladhi only. They strengthened their cantonment at Karnal.

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On 2 November, 1806, Ranjit Singh conveyed the following assurance to Mr. Seton, the British Resident at Delhi:

> Keep yourself at ease; the ties of friendship and union between the Hon'ble Company and me have been firmly established through the medium of General Lake and my uncle aforesaid. I am particularly attached to you. In consequence my heart is frequently seeking for accounts of your welfare. Considering my house to be your own, make me happy with friendly letters and favour me with your commands. It will delight my heart to receive them.[1]

While returning Ranjit Singh seized 12 villages of Ghungrana from Gujar Singh, son of Tara Singh of Rahon, and realized a tribute of Rs.12,000 from him. Sanehwal was taken from the widow of Sudha Singh, and restored on receiving a *nazarana* of Rs. 30,000. He dispossessed the 200-year-old Kalha family of Rackot then headed by Rani Nurulnisa of her 311 villages and vast movable property. She was given two villages for maintenance. Ludhiana was given to Raja Bhag Singh. He recrossed river Satluj on 10 November, 1806.

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Second Expedition, 27 August to 26 September, 1807

The Raja and Rani of Patiala began to quarrel again. Both invited Ranjit Singh to intervene on certain offers. Rivers Beas and Satluj were in spate. He crossed them at Harike on 27 August, 1807. He seized Jagraon from Ahmad Khan Gujar and gave it to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia for a *nazarana* of Rs. 40,000.

Ranjit Singh reached Patiala on 5 September, 1807. Meanwhile the Raja and Rani had made up their differences. Ranjit Singh told them that he was keen to maintain friendly relations with them, but it did not mean depriving him of the promised cannon and money, as the expedition had cost him a great deal more. Sahib Singh immediately handed over the Kare Khan gun. It was so called because of two large iron rings on its mouth. It was taken from Sirhind in 1764.[2] The Rani presented him a casket containing jewellery worth Rs. 70,000 and Rs. 30,000 in cash without a demur. Gian Singh says that the jewellery contained a rare necklace of pearls.

[1]Bengal Secret and Political Consultations Series of Manuscript Records in the India Office Library, quoted by B.J. Hasrat in his *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, pp. 55-56.

[2]In the second Sikh War the British took it to Multan and afterwards returned it to Patiala.

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Rani Aś Kaur wished to get it back. She taught her 10-year-old little son Karam Singh to salute Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the time of his departure when he was attended by all Sikh sardars. The Maharaja was highly pleased with the handsome and well-dressed prince, and took him in his lap. The boy at once held the necklace round Maharaja's neck with both hands, saying: "It is my necklace. Give it to me. You are a great king, you can have any number of such necklaces. I cannot get another".

The Maharaja tried his best to lure the boy with offers of other presents, but the boy clung fast to the necklace. The Maharaja was obliged to part with it.[1] Ranjit Singh granted a *khilat* to the Raja and promised everlasting friendship to both.

All the Cis-Satluj chiefs except Lal Singh of Kaithal and Mian Kishan Singh of Naraingarh had made submission to him at Patiala. Ranjit Singh made for Kaithal. Lal Singh offered Rs.12,000 and one elephant. The Maharaja then turned towards Naraingarh. This place had been seized by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in 1764. After his death in 1783 it was captured by the neighbouring Raja of Nahan who gave its charge to a member of the ruling family named Kishan Singh. He built a strong fort there with a deep and wide ditch around it. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia requested Ranjit Singh to recover Naraingarh for him. The Maharaja invested the fort, but failed to take it by storm. The garrison put forth a heroic defence. Ranjit Singh's general Fatah Singh Kalianwala was killed. Another great commander, Tara Singh Ghaiba, was wounded and he died on his way back home at Morindah. About 400 men of the Maharaja lost their lives. Mian Kishan Singh escaped into the hills. The garrison were put to the sword. The fort was razed to the ground. The place was made over to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia for Rs. 40,000.

Ranjit Singh returned by way of Raepur Rani, Ramgarh and Mani Majra (now a suburb of Chandigarh). He exacted a tribute of Rs. 30,000 from Gopal Singh of Mani Majra, Rs. 20,000 from Ranjit Singh of Manauli, and Rs.15,000 from Hari Singh of Sialbah. Morindah was seized from Nihal Singh and was given to Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. At Rupar he received a *nazarana* of Rs. 12,000 from Deva Singh. He crossed river Satluj on 26 September, 1807, and seized Rahon, the headquarters of his General Tara Singh Ghaiba. Several sardars in attendance presented him Rs. 80,000.

De facto Suzerainty of Ranjit Singh

As a result of his two expeditions Ranjit Singh had established his de

[1]Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, p. 885.

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facto suzerainty over the Sikh chiefs of the Cis-Satluj region. Most of them had paid him tribute. Some had lost estates in whole or in part. The British Government was not interested in extending its power beyond Yamuna. Even Charles Metcalfe employed in the Residency at Delhi was of the view that British acceptance of Ranjit Singh's claim of supremacy over Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs would make little difference as he had established his suzerainty in the region lying between rivers Yamuna and the Satluj.

Ranjit Singh's Fatal Mistakes

The greatest mistake committed by Ranjit Singh was to ignore Lal Singh of Kaithal and Sahib Singh of Patiala in giving a share of his loot in the Cis-Satluj region along with others. Both of these became bitterly hostile to Ranjit Singh. Sahib Singh, on account of his imbecility, did not matter much, though he was the most powerful chief. Lal Singh was completely on the side of the British. He was not a big chief, but he wielded great influence with the local British officers working at Delhi and in the Ganga Doab. He resolved to retaliate upon Ranjit Singh for not attaching any importance to him. He was on very intimate terms with Bhag Singh of Jind. Though Bhag Singh had received great consideration from his nephew, yet he did not like the alleged murderer of his sister. Besides he understood Ranjit Singh's nature and temperament. He was convinced that Ranjit Singh in due course of time would sweep off all chiefs of the Cis-Satluj region as he was doing in Trans-Satluj country. Lal Singh won over Bhag Singh to his view. Linking Sahib Singh with them was no problem. But he did not like to join them openly due to the hostility of his wife. So he deputed his own representative Chain Singh to work with them. Thus this trio in complicity with Englishmen serving in the Delhi area managed to set Ranjit Singh's scheme at nought.

Ranjit Singh's Anxiety to Secure British Approval

On reaching Lahore Ranjit Singh planned occupation of Cis-Satluj region. Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha was called to Lahore with a detailed map of this area. The only problem was to secure British approval or neutrality. To fathom their mind Ranjit Singh decided to visit Hardwar on the occasion of Kumbh fair in April, 1808. He deputed two high officers, Mohan Singh and Bishan Singh to Delhi in February, 1808, to ascertain the views of the British Resident, and to secure permission for his visit to Hardwar. Another vakil, Mohar Singh, was also sent to Delhi to collect information indirectly.

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The British Resident at Delhi wrote to the Secretary to the Governor-General on 4 March, 1808:

> Ranjit Singh's vakil is here. He wants to know the limits of the British northern boundary. If I tell him that we do not wish to interfere in the territory beyond Karnal, all the Sikh chiefs between the Yamuna and the Satluj will be at his mercy. He might demand excessive *nazaranas* or take possession of their country. The most desirable thing will be to have river Satluj as the boundary of Ranjit Singh. The country of the Sikh chiefs should be independent both of us and of him, and any interference either by him or by us should be considered an unfriendly act.

The British military commanders employed in this region were of the view that the British Government should establish a protectorate over the Cis-Satluj chiefs and friendly relations with Ranjit Singh. It was considered necessary for the defence of British India. "A united Sikh nation might throw in their lot with the invader with fatal results", they said. Archibald Seton agreed in their opinion and he informed the Governor-General about it.

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The Samana Conference, 4 March, 1808

The Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs were deeply perturbed at Ranjit Singh's policy of absorption and elimination. They had experienced rapacity of Ranjit Singh's army, and found no security to themselves from the Lahore ruler. They held a conference on 4 March, 1808, at Samana in Patiala territory, a central place for all of them, 24 km from Nabha, 28 km from Patiala, 35 km from Sangrur (Jind) and 48 km from Kaithal. It was attended by four major chiefs and six important minor sardars. The following resoltuion was passed:

> We, the rulers of Sirhind province, are placed between two big ambitious powers. We cannot maintain our independent position for long. The British Government is sure and certain to advance from the Yamuna to the Satluj. Similarly Ranjit Singh has his eyes upon us. It is certain he will cross the Satluj.
>
> We have to choose between the two evils. To go under the British is like courting tuberclosis (*Tap-e-diq*), which brings gradual but sure death of the patient. The alliance with Ranjit Singh will be fatal like delirium (*Sarsam*) which finishes the victim within hours.

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Meeting with British Resident

All voted for the British. They sent their vakils to Delhi to seek British protection against Ranjit Singh. On 7 March, 1808, the Resident wrote to the Secretary to the Governor-General:

> All the vakils of the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs sought an interview with me yesterday, 6 March. They referred to the growing fear from Ranjit Singh regarding their possessions, and showed determination to seek British protection against his aggression.

A couple of days later the chiefs themselves reached Delhi. They were: Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, Diwan Chain Singh of Patiala, Maulvi Ghulam Hasan of Nabha, Bhagwan Singh of Jagadhri and Dulcha Singh of Radaur. They held several meetings with Resident Seton, but they did not discuss the subject as they were always accompanied by Ranjit Singh's vakil, Mohar Singh. On 21 March Mohar Singh left on a pilgrimage to Gaya. Then the Sikh deputation held a free and frank discussion with Seton. The main point of their argument was that the Sirhind division had been a part of the Delhi province under the Mughals. As Delhi was under the British, they should be taken under British protection. A petition was handed over to him. The last meeting was held on 31 March, 1808. A note signed and sealed by Bhag Singh, Lal Singh, Chain Singh and Ghulam Hasan was submitted to Seton. It stated that they would have no objection to the British forces marching to the Satluj across their territories for the purpose of their protection. Seton told them that he would forward their case to the Governor-General. He gave them a vague assurance, since the British Government was following a non-interference policy after 1805, and since they wanted an alliance with Ranjit Singh, in order to check the probable advance of Napoleon into India. The chiefs felt disheartened. They decided to win the goodwill of Ranjit Singh, and went to Hardwar to meet him.

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Ranjit Singh's Expected Visit at Hardwar, March, 1808

On 19 March, 1808, Ranjit Singh was expected at Hardwar to attend a fair and festival on the occasion of Kumbh. The British Government sent C.T. Metcalfe, an Assistant in the Delhi Residency, to welcome him. Ranjit Singh did not go. Lord Minto, the Governor-General, felt offended at Ranjit Singh's absence at Hardwar. He complained to Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja replied that Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal and Ratan Kaur, widow of Tara Singh Ghaiba, Chain

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Singh of Patiala, and Jaswant Singh of Nabha had frightened him. They told him that a British regiment had been posted at Hardwar. The whole campus had been barricaded with 12 gates to trap him. They strongly urged him not to go there. He forwarded copies of their letters to the Governor-General. The investigation into these allegations was not pursued in order to avoid any further complicacy.

Sahib Singh of Patiala, Bhag Singh of Jind, Lal Singh of Kaithal and Gurdit Singh of Ladwa attended the fair. Under instructions of English officers, they deposited their arms in their camp, a few miles away from Hardwar.

Cis-Satluj Chiefs at Lahore

Meanwhile Ranjit Singh had learnt about the Samana conference and the chiefs' visit to Delhi. He also knew that Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal was their spokesman. He deputed Baba Amir Chand, nephew of Bhai Sahib Singh, and Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh with a *khilat*, and promise of a jagir worth one lakh of rupees annually to Lal Singh.

All the sardars except Bhagwan Singh of Jagadhri reached Lahore. Chain Singh vakil represented Patiala. Ranjit Singh conferred rich presents and *khilats* on them, and assured them of their full safety and security of their estates.

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Rani Mahtab Kaur

Rani Mahtab Kaur was the first wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She was the daughter of Rani Sada Kaur, head of the Kanahya Misl. She had played a prominent part in building up the power of Ranjit Singh. Mahtab Kaur was married to him in 1786 when Ranjit Singh was six years' old and Mahtab Kaur was of about 4 years of age. Ranjit Singh's second wife was Raj Kaur of the Nakai Misl and was married in 1798. In 1802 this lady gave birth to Kharak Singh who naturally became heir apparent.

Just about this time Ranjit Singh had given his heart and soul to Moran, a dancing girl of bewitching beauty and charm, about 11 or 12 years of age. Whatever time of the day or night he could spare from state business was spent with Moran. Mahtab Kaur and Raj Kaur were effectually neglected. Raj Kaur was generally satisfied with having a son. In order to avoid jealousy of the cowife she retired to Shaikhupura, her jagir, with Kharak Singh and Bhayya Ram Singh as manager of her estate. The Bhayya treated her not only as a queen but also as a woman.

Mahtab Kaur was pining for a child. She pressed Ranjit Singh to live

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with her. He paid occasional visits to her, and in consequence in the beginning of 1806 she gave birth to a male child named Sher Singh because of his sturdy build and intelligent looks. Next year, in January, 1807, a second son was born to her named Tara Singh, and he was a sickly, lean and thin child.

This naturally made Mahtab Kaur proud and haughty in which attitude she was greatly encouraged by her mother. Ranjit Singh's fascination and passion for Moran had remained unabashed throughout five or six years. He had issued silver and gold coins in her name. This gave the dancing girl supremacy over Ranjit's lawfully married wives. Mahtab Kaur being the first wife claimed priority over others. She made it a point of honour to drive away Moran. This resulted in nagging and continuous quarrels. Sada Kaur supported her daughter and openly scolded Ranjit Singh. He was not prepared to give up Moran. To punish Sada Kaur, he seized the major part of her estates and property. She was left with three important places, Batala, Mukerian and Atalgarh fort. Mahtab Kaur was driven away to her mother with the threat that he would disclaim Sher Singh and Tara Singh as his own sons.[1] This took place in 1807. Sada Kaur grew furious. She began to undermine Ranjit Singh's influence and authority with the Sikh chiefs and his army in order to throw him out of power. Ranjit Singh was terribly afraid of her intriguing nature. He felt that she would ruin him. To avoid this catastrophe he often visited Batala, called Sada Kaur mother, touched her feet, promised to discard Moran, restore Mahtab Kaur to her real position and according to Metcalfe he cohabited with her. This stalemate continued as both sides were strongly suspicious of each other.

The time of Kumbh fair at Hardwar drew near. Ranjit Singh had cancelled his visit, but he wished to get news from a reliable source. Mahtab Kaur, 25 years old, offered herself to visit Hardwar. Ranjit Singh agreed. With necessary paraphernalia befitting her status she arrived at Hardwar in March, 1808. She was entrusted by Sada Kaur with a secret job to escort Captain Mathews to Batala; while Ranjit Singh gave her the permit to guide Captain Mathews to him from Fatahgarh.

[1]Taking Ranjit Singh's threat seriously several writers on the subject have concocted a false story that both these boys were imported into the palace, and that Sher Singh and Tara Singh were illegitimate children. Is it believable that Mahtab Kaur and Sada Kaur staked their life, honour and property for the sake of other sons. Only a real mother and real grandmother could do so. Ranjit Singh himself admitted them to be his own sons, and assigned important jobs to Sher Singh on account of his valorous nature, Tara Singh being deficient in physical and mental powers was generally kept in the background.

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Captain A. Mathews

Captain A. Mathews was a deputy commissary of Ordnance posted at Fatahgarh on the Ganga under Adjutant General. The British Govern ment was adopting measures to check Napoleon's expected advance to India by the land route. The Governor-General had decided to send envoys to Iran, Afghanistan and the Panjab. Captain Mathews was selected to make a preliminary survey of the political situation in the Panjab and Kashmir. He was to appear as a private individual, although he was supplied with a passport, a few elephants and horses and some other valuable presents to be given to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His application for six months' leave was sanctioned on 11 March, 1808. He immediately applied to Ranjit Singh for permission to travel in the Panjab in April-May, 1808.

Mahtab Kaur at Hardwar

At Hardwar Rani Mahtab Kaur, sent her confidential servant to Fatahgarh to meet Captain A. Mathews. This man told the Captain that the Rani's principal object in coming so far was to escort him to Amritsar on behalf of Sada Kaur. He also delivered to Mathews a letter from Maharaja Ranjit Singh permitting him to visit Panjab. The Maharaja had asked him to have as few attendants as possible. Mathews' servant who belonged to Batala and knew all about Sada Kaur and Mahtab Kaur, accompanied Rani's servant to Hardwar. She told him that the Maharaja did not come due to 'mistrust' of his own 'personal safety'.

Mathews left Fatahgarh on 13 April, 1808 and stayed at Hardwar on 13-14 April. The Rani told Mathews' confidential servant "in the most unreserved terms"[1] and of her own free will, the real purpose of her visit. Mathews wrote to his chief that her mother, Rani Sada Kaur wished "to enter into an immediate combination with our Government to dispossess the Rajah Runjeet Sing of his present authority in the Punjab." If the proposal was accepted she would get "the country transferred to the English." To achieve this objective she only required "a small auxiliary force of two Regiments of Infantry and one of Cavalry to assemble either on the Borders of our own country" or at Buria. This would give stability and confidence to chiefs and people. There was no possibility of failure. She would like to meet an authoritative person with all her confederates. She would leave her daughter, Mahtab Kaur, with the English as a surety. In return she only required her present possessions of Batala and its

[1]NAI, Foreign Department, Secret Consultations, 13 May, 1808, no. 1, in M.L. Ahluwalia's *Select Documents*, pp. 36-37.

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dependencies yielding a revenue of 9 or 10 lakhs of rupees annually, to be guaranteed to her in jagir, and she would pay the Company 6 annas in the Rupee (37.5%) of revenues. She further told Mathews' confidant that she had two sons by Ranjit Singh. The elder one was two years old, while the younger was over one year. Now he was ignoring her completely and was living with concubines, particularly with Moran "who influences all his councils and so enamoured is he of this lady that he secludes himself with her for several days together".[1]

She added that Ranjit Singh's army was secretly on the side of Rani Sada Kaur. Only 1,000 to 1,500 soldiers were attached to him. The rest would desert him on receiving a green signal from her. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala would join her with 5,000 horse and foot. Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal would also bring the same number of troops. Bhagwan Singh of Buria would participate with 2,000 troops. Other Cis-Satluj sardars were with Rani Sada Kaur. Bhag Singh of Jind was a doubtful case due to family connection.

She said that the army of Ranjit Singh was disaffected due to general illtreatment. He paid no respect to rank and used grossest expressions of abuse. The cavalry was undisciplined.

Mathews commented that both the Ranis, mother and daughter, were determined on "his total ruin. They were so firmly resolved upon it" that in case of their failure with the English, they would try other means, "at the risk of their fortunes, their lives and everything they consider to be their nearest and dearest interests".

Mathews did not talk to the Rani on this subject nor did he meet other Sikh chiefs as they were "enemies to Runjeet".

At Buria

Mathews arrived at Saharanpur on 14 April. Rani Mahtab Kaur joined him there with an escort. They reached Buria on 15 April. It was situated 5 km west of the Yamuna. They halted there on 15-17 April on account of heavy rainfall. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala, Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal and Bhagwan Singh, chief of Buria, paid their respects to Rani Mahtab Kaur. Mathews was warmly received at Buria. Every mark of respect and attention was shown him by the chiefs and their subjects. Mathews liked the land and people due to "high cultivation, many populous villages and of great comfort and happiness enjoyed by the inhabitants."[2]

[1]Ibid., no. 2, pp. 37-40.
[2]Ibid., p. 37.

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In the Jalandhar Doab

About the Jalandhar Doab Captain Mathews observed that petty feuds prevailed everywhere. The conflict between rival parties was common. They kept up "a constant fire of small arms". The country was fine. Plains were covered with ripe crops. Soil was rich and most productive. Fine crops could be produced without much labour. But only one-fourth of cultivation was done, and poor produce was raised. The cultivators ploughed the ground and sowed corn. There was no watering of crops. Thin and low crop was the result. The whole country was fortified. Every village and every town were walled and surrounded by a dry ditch.

"I do think the Singhnees and Singhs, the very best people in Hindostan".[1] Mathews was constantly asked for wine. He further wrote that Jalandhar was held by two brothers who were at open war with each other. In the day they fought with small arms. At night they burnt each other's ripe cornfields. A day before Mathews' arrival, 50 horsemen of Fatah Singh Ahluwalia had destroyed the village of Rani Ghanaya.[2]

Lord Lake

Captain A. Mathews travelled right across Cis-Satluj region and the Jalandhar Doab in April-May, 1808. He found that Lord Lake was mentioned in every village and town "in the strongest terms of gratitude for his attention to the safety of their persons and properties, a treatment so different from what they experience in the passage of a native army". A. Mathews was also told that it was "the first wish of their hearts to live under our Government".

At Batala

Mathews was received by two principal officers of Rani Sada Kaur on the road near Batala on 3 May, 1808. He found that all the zamindars from the Satluj to Batala were in favour of Sada Kaur. Rani Mahtab Kaur was sometimes with him, and sometimes ahead or behind him. But Sada Kaur's messenger always accompanied him. Ranjit Singh was then at Gujranwala. "There is no doubt," wrote Mathews, "but the Raja is in great dread of her resolves". He frequently visited Batala, called Sada Kaur mother, goes down upon his knees and prays her to be his friend. He promised to discard Moran and restore Mahtab Kaur "to his exclusive attentions". The Rani did not trust him and was determined to "seek his ruin or her own by every possible means".

[1]Ibid., 20 June, 1808, no. 39, pp. 73-75.
[2]Ibid., p. 73.

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Mathews did not meet Sada Kaur nor did he accept any presents from her. All discussions took place with his confidential munshi, a resident of Batala. He learnt that Sada Kaur and Mahtab Kaur both drank wine.

The Youngest Son of Ranjit Singh

Mathews recorded in his despatch for the Governor-General: "The Ranee sent the younger son of the Rajah to me last night (3 May, 1808) to be cured of a trifling cold. He is an infant a year and a half old, very weak and emaciated." This child was born when Mahtab Kaur had been driven away to Batala, and she must be brooding and bewailing over her lot all the time. For this reason she gave birth to a sickly child. At Batala Mathews received Ranjit Singh's letter inviting him to Lahore.

Atalgarh

Mathews wrote that Beas was fordable 5 km west of Chakki Ghat and also at Atalgarh. It had a fort which was in possession of Rani Sada Kaur. It was garrisoned by Rani's troops with 10 guns. It stood on the eastern side of river Beas. It had a very broad, deep dry ditch. The forts of Pathankot and Sialkot recently taken by Ranjit Singh were inferior to it.

Amritsar

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Mathews left Batala on 10 May and reached Amritsar the same day escorted by Ranjit Singh's men. The Raja had written to Rama Nand his banker, and Aroor Mal his former Diwan to look after Mathews.

In Mathews' estimation Amritsar was 10 km in circumference. It was considered the capital of the Panjab. Streets were narrow, houses good and lofty, built of burnt bricks. It was the grand emporium of trade for shawls and saffron from Kashmir and other commodities from all parts of India. Ranjit Singh levied an excise on all commodities according to their value. Rich merchants and bankers lived there. The Maharaja had his treasury at Amritsar. His "habits of life being of the most extravagant and expensive kind", the treasury had only a few lakhs of rupees.

Mathews' first visit to Durbar Sahib cost him Rs. 200. He was lodged in rooms close to the temple, and was allowed to go to the top. When he entered the temple he took off his hat. The Durbar Sahib was "a bastion of about 135 yards square". In the cnetre of it stood a pretty temple which was highly decorated from outside and inside. Ranjit Singh made additional ornamental work to it. The temple was called Harmandar. There were 5 to 6 hundred "rababis or priests". Ranjit Singh visited it twice a day during his residence at Amritsar. "No person can visit the temple the

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first time without paying a sum of money to the Akalees, who divide it equally". The choirs of singers continued chanting from 3 A.M. till late at night continuously. "Although the priests are held in the greatest reverence, and lead the most pious exemplary lives themselves; still that abominable unnatural crime is very commonly practised here by the Singhs who, in other respect bear a great similarity of character to British sailors spending their money, as far as they get it in the pleasure of women and wine. The number of concubines or fine women who go to bathe at the temple in the morning is prodigious; they are far superior in symmetry of person and beauty of countenance to those of any other part of India." These "young handsome women" were well dressed and wore ornaments worth about 6 or 7 hundred rupees. "The Singhs being greatly devoted to pleasure give every encouragement to this description of people."

Mathews says the priests said, "Gooru Bakhshay Raj (May the Guru give you country!). The Sikhs had objection to our rule for killing cows, calves and bullocks for meat eating".[1]

Lahore

Mathews arrived at Lahore on 20 May, 1808. It was 60 km west of Amritsar. He pitched his tent near the Fort. Ranjit Singh sent him Rs.105 and a guard of sepoys. His two battalions received new clothing. The next day he was given accommodation inside the Fort. Ravi flowed touching the walls of the Fort. On 23 May he was received in a fine saloon by Ranjit Singh who was "extremely chatty and affable". He was of 28 years and blind of left eye. The right eye was large and shining. He asked Mathews several questions on military and politics of Europe. The Raja was a most unaffected pleasing man and of very good understanding. He regretted that he could not get Europeans in his service. "He is both feared and beloved by his men". He was "most capital horseman" and rode every morning till seven o'clock with only a few attendants on the level plain between the wall of the town and the river. He had beautiful horses, some from Kandhar and Iran. They were richly caparisoned. Wherever the Raja was, two or three horses were kept ready. About 200 deserters from British army were in his service. He did not trust them. The Raja had taken a Frenchman in service lately. He came from Bharatpur. He was paid Rs. 3 a day. As the Raja did not increase his wages, he left his service.

The Raja had ten big ferry boats on the Ravi at Lahore for his guns

[1]NAI, Foreign Department, Secret Consultations, 11 July, 1808, no. 13, in M.L. Ahluwalia's *Select Documents*, pp. 94-97.

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and army. One of the boats could carry 4 elephants. The Raja had another mint at Lahore as well as a cannon foundry. Several brass and iron guns were purchased from different parts of India. Mathews rode out with the Raja who returned on one of Mathews' elephants. The Raja accepted one elephant with a howdah and presented to Mathews a fine Kandhar horse and some shawls. The Raja showed him Kare Khan gun which he had taken from Patiala Raja.

Bhag Singh and Fatah Singh Ahluwalia sent by Ranjit Singh to Lord Lake received from him 17 presents. Lake sent a message if Ranjit Singh wished to meet him he could come alone, and if he would return the visit the Maharaja could come accompanied by 1,000 or more horse. Ranjit Singh felt sorry for not meeting Lake, because he thought he could have got from him what he wanted. Bhag Singh and Lal Singh forbade him to go. Lake had brought presents for him worth Rs. 50,000.[1]

On the morning of 30 May he imprisoned two of his sowars for following him in his morning ride, and deprived them of their horses and clothes. He might be having Moran sitting behind him on the same horse.

Ranji Singh had a watch of very coarse workmanship set in a brass case for which he paid Rs. 1200. Ranjit Singh had 400 *shutarnals* (camel swivels).

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The Raja of Bharatpur had proposed marriage of his daughter to one of Ranjit Singh's sons; but the offer was withdrawn because he "disapproved highly of Ranjeet's dissipated habits of life".

On the receipt of Mathews' reports the Governor-General felt that Mathews, though a private individual, was considered by the chiefs of the Panjab, an accredited agent of the British Government. Hence he was immediately recalled. He was ordered to report himself without the least delay to the Resident at Delhi. Mathews left Lahore for Saharanpur on 23 June, 1808.[2]

Metcalfe's Mission to Lahore

C.T. Metcalfe was the first Assistant to the British Resident at Delhi. He was fully acquainted with the local problems of the government, and had received practical training in the Wellesley School of diplomacy and politics. Though young, being in his early twenties, he was appointed by Lord Minto, the Governor-General, as the British Government's authorised diplomat to conduct negotiations with Ranjit Singh leading to a treaty of friendship on British terms.

[1]Ibid., no. 13, pp. 94-101.
[2]Ibid., pp. 41-42, 118.

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Metcalfe left Delhi on 6 August, 1808. He was warmly received everywhere. On 19 August he wrote from Pehowa that the country was full of water. The roads were very deep with mud. Soil was soft. The cattle could not easily move. Direct road was impassable. He had to take circuitous routes. His camp could cover only 16 km daily.

Metcalfe reached Patiala on 22 August. Raja Sahib Singh offered the keys of Patiala fort to Metcalfe and asked him to give them back as a gift of the British Government. Ranjit Singh had sent Mian Imam-ud-din, one of his most confidential officers, to Patiala, to receive Metcalfe and accompany him to Lahore. Imam-ud-din delivered Ranjit Singh's letter to Metcalfe.

Metcalfe crossed the Satluj at Talwandi Ghat on 1st September and reached Nakodar on 2 September. Ranjit Singh was encamped at Kasur, and asked Metcalfe to join him there. The Mission crossed the Beas at Bhairowal Ghat on 5 September. On 9 September Metcalfe reached Khem Karan, 8 km distant from Ranjit Singh's camp. At 6 km from Maharaja's camp, Metcalfe was received by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, Mohkam Chand, Ranjit Singh's prime minister and commander-in-chief, and other sardars at the head of 2,000 cavalry. The Mission was lodged about 1¼ km from Ranjit Singh's camp.

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On 12 September Metcalfe paid his first visit to the Maharaja. He was received by Ranjit Singh outside a large enclosure. He embraced all the gentlemen of the Mission, conducted them to the tents that had been pitched for their reception. They were seated in chairs. The Maharaja made two observations. One was an expression of grief for the death of Lord Lake. The other was about the British Government's good faith. Metcalfe received an elephant, a horse, a string of pearls, a jigha, a sarpech, clothes and shawls. In the evening a salute was fired as a compliment to the Mission.

On the morning of 16 September the Maharaja paid a visit to Metcalfe. Captain Popham met him between his camp and of the Mission. Metcalfe received him at the entrance of the enclosure in which tents of the Mission had been pitched. He was accompanied by a select party of chiefs and officers of State and household. He conversed on military subjects.

Ranjit Singh told Metcalfe that Jaswant Rao Holkar was a determined rascal (*pakka haramzada*). When he was in the Panjab Jaswant Rao prohibited his troops from plundering as long as Lord Lake's army was near him, but let them loose on the country as soon as His Lordship had commenced his return journey to the British dominion.

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Metcalfe presented Governor-General's letter to Ranjit Singh on 19 September, 1808. On 22 September, Metcalfe explained that the main purpose of his Mission was to take joint action against Napoleon's intended invasion of India. Ranjit Singh in return demanded acceptance of his sovereignty over the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs. Metcalfe replied that it was beyond his competency and he would refer the matter to the Governor-General. He made the following recommendation: "I take the liberty of expressing my opinion, founded upon the observations made in my present situation, that if it is in view to attach Ranjit Singh to the British Government and to make him a friend by conciliation, the concession which he requires is essentially necessary for that purpose."

Imam-ud-din stayed in Metcalfe's camp with Hakim Aziz-ud-din.

Metcalfe's First Impressions of Ranjit Singh

Metcalfe noted that Ranjit Singh preferred to be called *Badshah* rather than Maharaja. He was also pleased when addressed as Singh Sahib which signified that he was the head of all the Sikhs. This denomination was applied exclusively to him. Others called him Maharaja, Raja and Sardar. His orders were universally and instantly obeyed. The greatest sardar and the lowest soldier showed the same deference to him. In spite of his strictness his manners were affable and familiar.

As regards his army, Metcalfe noted that he had formed battalions of Telingas, many of whom were deserters from the British army. With these foreign corps and his guns, he conquered territory. He was keen to obtain knowledge of European system of discipline, and to introduce it as much as possible into his Army. Two months later Metcalfe reported the strength of Ranjit Singh's army which was considered nearly accurate:

Regular Infantry	1,500
Irregular Infantry	5,000
Cavalry	6,000
Army of his Chiefs	15,000
Total	27,500

Guns 40
Camel swivels 100

Ranjit Singh felt that his demand might not be accepted. Knowing that

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it would take at least six weeks for a reply to come from Calcutta, he decided to establish his de facto authority over the Cis-Satluj chiefs during the interval. The whole country up to Thanesar-Kaithal had been almost subjugated. The chiefs who were not yet avowedly his subjects could not oppose him by arms. The following chiefs were in attendance upon him: Bhag Singh of Jind, Jaswant Singh of Nabha, Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, and Gurdit Singh of Ladwa. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala was represented by his principal manager Chain Singh who was also in his train. There were vakils from Thanesar, Buria and other places.

Ranjit Singh's Third Cis-Satluj Campaign, 25 September to 2 December, 1808

Ranjit Singh left Kasur on 25 September and informed Metcalfe to follow him for further negotiations. He crossed the Satluj at Harikepatan and encamped at Khai, 20 km to the east of river Satluj. This region was assigned to Nihal Singh Atariwala. Karam Singh Chahal at the head of 2,000 troops captured Faridkot from Raja Gulab Singh on 1 October, 1808. It was a dependency of Patiala. It was given to Rani Sada Kaur for a tribute of Rs. 22,000. At Faridkot, Metcalfe submitted the draft of the proposed treaty to Ranjit Singh.

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Terms of the Proposed Treaty

1. If the King of France ever attacks India, the British Government and Sardar Ranjit Singh would combine their forces to check his advance.
2. In case the British army has to fight the enemy in Afghanistan, Sardar Ranjit Singh would allow it to pass through his territory.
3. If the British Government is called upon to correspond with the Shah of Kabul, Sardar Ranjit Singh would protect the British messengers passing across his state.

Ranjit Singh Places His Own Terms Before Metcalfe

1. In case of any conflict between Lahore and Kabul, the British Government would not interfere.
2. Permanent friendship should be maintained between the Lahore Durbar and the British Government.
3. Ranjit Singh's authority over all the Sikh states upto the Yamuna should be acknowledged.

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Metcalfe pressed Ranjit Singh to indicate a place where Metcalfe should stay for further discussions.

Malerkotla

The Maharaja advanced farther. Kot Kapura was already under him. He captured Jaito and reached Malerkotla on 21 October. He demanded a *nazarana* of one lakh of rupees. The Nawab could collect Rs. 36,639 and 10 annas. He obtained Rs. 20,000 by mortgaging five villages to Patiala.[1] The Nawab expressed his inability to pay the balance. The Maharaja ordered his troops to plunder the town. It was saved by the intervention of the Sikh chiefs who stood surety for payment. The Maharaja posted a military force until the balance was cleared in full. The Nawab sent his special agents to Metcalfe requesting for British protection.

Metcalfe realized that his presence in Maharaja's camp might be interpreted as British approval of Ranjit Singh's activities. He refused to accompany the Maharaja farther. He was asked to stay at Ghungrana, situated 32 km south-east from Ludhiana and 25 km north-west of Malerkotla, until Ranjit Singh's return to that place.

The Maharaja left Malerkotla on November 1, 1808, and ordered his troops to march straight to Ambala. He came to Nabha and sounded Jaswant Singh about capturing Patiala. He was told that the town was in a strong defensive position. The Maharaja joined his army near Ambala. Rani Daya Kanwar's two strongholds of Ambala and Mulana were captured. A sum of Rs. 50,000 and other valuable articles were seized. Ranjit Singh posted there a strong contingent of 5,000 troops under Ganda Singh Safi.

Shahabad

Ranjit Singh stationed himself at Shahabad. The chiefs of Buria, Jagadhri and Radaur met him there, and paid tributes. They agreed to furnish him permanently a body of horse for the Raja's service. They accepted to be his subjects. They gave him some guns. Their territory lay along the Yamuna.

Ranjit Singh met Sahib Singh of Patiala at Lakhnaur, a place between Shahabad and Patiala on 24 November and exchanged turbans and presents.

Ranjit Singh maintained friendly correspondence with Metcalfe during this campaign. Mian Imam-ud-din was always in attendance on Metcalfe.

From Shahabad Ranjit Singh turned homeward. He did not go to

[1]They were Jaghera, Jhammat, Kalahera, Lehra, Pahira.

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Thanesar on account of British proximity. He reached Sirhind on 28 November. He crossed the Satluj on 2 December, and encamped at Phillaur, 8 km beyond the river. Mohkam Chand, his Diwan, had been sent to Kangra. Ranjit Singh went to Amritsar.

Amritsar

Metcalfe reached Amritsar on 10 December, 1808, and visited the Raja. "Immediately after my entrance", wrote Metcalfe, "the singers and dancers were introduced, and shortly after wine and cups". Metcalfe told him he had to deliver a letter from the Governor-General. He took it, but postponed the perusal of it. Afterwards Ranjit Singh went to the house of Moran. He got so busy in merry-making with her that he failed to negotiate with Metcalfe and even to reply to the Governor-General's ultimatum contained in his letter given by Metcalfe on 10 December.

Moran's Conversion of a Hindu Youth

As already stated Moran was a dancing girl before joining Ranjit Singh's harem. During 10 weeks' absence of Ranjit Singh in the Cis-Satluj regions he appears to have developed a love affair with a Khatri young man of Amritsar. On Ranjit Singh's return to Amritsar, in order to have the youth with her, she converted him to Islam and employed him as an attendant. This led to a disturbance in the city. The shops were closed, and business came to a standstill. Whenever the Maharaja forced the shopkeepers to open their shops, the Brahmans and Akalis of the Durbar Sahib compelled them not to obey the Maharaja and imposed fines on those who defied their orders. The unruly mob plundered and burnt the houses of *kanchanis* (dancing girls) and made the Maharaja agree to shift the red light area outside the city. The Hindus demanded surrender of Moran for punishment. The Maharaja offered her brother to be punished. The infuriated Hindus surrounded the residence of the Maharaja who fled to Lahore with Moran. The Hindus of Lahore did not allow the Maharaja to come out of the fort. The Brahmans assailed him from below the walls of the fort and went on a hunger strike. Hindu-Muslim riots broke out at Amritsar and Lahore. Maharaja suppressed them, the agitation ended on 16 December, 1808.[1]

Ranjit Singh loved Moran so intensely that he swallowed the bitter pill, believing:

[1]NAI, Foreign Department, Secret Consultations, 30 January, 1809, nos. 100-9; C.T. Metcalfe, envoy to Lahore, to N.B. Edmonstone, Secretary to the Government of India in the Secret and Political Departments.

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Kuchh nuqs anar ki latafat men nahin
Gar us men hon gale sare dane chand.
(A pomegranate does not lose its deliciousness if it contains a few rotten grains.)

In 1808 Moran issued her own coins bearing the effigy of an Arsi, an ornament worn on the thumb of the left hand. It had a small round piece of mirror fixed in it. On the reverse the coin had an effigy of a dancing girl and the tail of a peacock. These coins remained current till AD 1827.

Professor Sita Ram Kohli writes: "Some of these coins both gold and silver and believed to be issued under the influence of Moran are preserved in the Lahore Museum. These coins are known as *Arsiwali mohar* and *Moranshahi sikka*".

Metcalfe's Views About Ranjit Singh

Metcalfe sent a number of despatches to the Governor-General. Having minutely observed Ranjit Singh's conduct, he considered the Maharaja lacking in "cordiality, good faith, consistency or hearty cooperation". He said: "He has no regard for truth and can descend even to the violation of solemn promises; and the whole tenor of his behaviour impresses me most strongly with the conviction of his total want of principle". The substance of Metcalfe's despatches was that Ranjit Singh was absolutely undependable as an ally. In another despatch Metcalfe accused Ranjit Singh "of duplicity and shameless falsehood".

As regards Ranjit Singh's position in the family, court and camp, Metcalfe stated that it was very shaky. His mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, was bitterly opposed to him, because of his infatuation for Moran. Besides he had seized a large part of her territory and property, had deserted her daughter Mahtab Kaur, his first wife, and had declared his two sons by her as not his own. On 15 December, 1808, Metcalfe had received a message from Sada Kaur offering a free passage to British troops through her territory and her Atalgarh fort for a depot. Metcalfe reported:

> He has cohabited again with his wife Mehtab Koour, whom he had cast off for a long time, and acknowledges her children to be his, whom he used to disown. He coaxes his old Mother-in-Law, Suda Koour, and promises to make a handsome provision for her grandchildren, the sons of Mehtab Koour. To all his chiefs he makes large promises and behaves towards them with unusual respect, attention and kindness.

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> They can hardly however be deceived, by a conduct, so palpably the result of selfish motives, and a temporary policy.

Metcalfe further said that there was disaffection among all his chiefs, his army, and his own family. "There is every reason to believe that nothing would unite all the chiefs of the Punjab to Ranjeet Singh".

Metcalfe's firm conviction was that in case of war Ranjit Singh would be totally defeated, and he would be compelled to sue for peace instantly when the British army reached the Satluj, and would accept their terms.

As regards Ranjit Singh's demand to unite the Cis-Satluj region with his kingdom, Metcalfe wrote to him on 12 December, 1808, that in a letter to Lord Lake in February, 1804, he had requested him to accept river Satluj as the boundary between his own territory and that of the British Government. He had also informed the British Resident at Delhi through the Resident agent Sayyid Raza Khan for fixing the boundary between the two Governments at river Satluj.[1] Besides the Cis-Satluj chiefs, one and all, without any exception, wanted British protection against him. Metcalfe believed that in view of the past history of the Phulkian States they could be fully trusted regarding their steadfastness and loyalty. The people of the Sirhind province also preferred the British to Ranjit Singh. Both Seton and Metcalfe suggested to the Governor-General that there should be no united Sikh kingdom on the borders of British India. They urged him to carry "the war into the heart of the Enemy's country", immediately.

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Ultimatum to Ranjit Singh

Lord Minto, the Governor-General, asked Seton to start negotiations with the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs. Seton at once sent confidential messengers to Jind, Patiala, Nabha, Kaithal, Thanesar, Radaur and Buria. Metcalfe was informed to tell Ranjit Singh that river Satluj would be his southern boundary and the Sirhind chiefs would be under British protection.

By this time the Governor-General received the news from London that Napoleon had been involved in the Peninsular War in Portugal and Spain. To check his proposed advance towards India, the Treaty of Dardanelles had been formed with Turkey in January, 1809. The Governor-General instructed Metcalfe and Seton to deal with Ranjit Singh firmly. Consequently, Metcalfe told Ranjit Singh that:

[1]NAI. Foreign Department, Secret Consultations, 2 March, 1804, no. 152, in M.L. Ahluwalia's *Select Documents*.

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1. River Satluj would be his southern boundary.
2. All the Cis-Satluj chiefs had been taken under British protection.
3. He would have to restore all the places captured by him since Metcalfe's arrival in his camp to their original owners.
4. All his troops must be withdrawn from the Cis-Satluj region at once.
5. The military post and office of the British Political Agent would be established at Ludhiana.

Metcalfe totally rejected all the arguments and pleadings of Ranjit Singh. The main emphasis was on immediate vacation of Ambala, Malerkotla, Faridkot and Khai. Metcalfe threatened to leave Ranjit Singh's court at once. Ranjit Singh began to make preparation for war. Metcalfe urged the Governor-General to send a strong military force to the Satluj.

Instructions to Lt. Colonel Ochterlony

The Governor-General asked the Commander-in-Chief to despatch a force to Ludhiana. He instructed Lt. Col. David Ochterlony to lead the advance force. He was given the following instructions:

1. You should proceed with supplies sufficient for consumption of your detachment for a week and always to keep up that quantity by purchase.

2. You should purchase *atta* (flour) at twenty seers for a rupee and not less than that.

3. Before marching you should ascertain that the required provision of every kind has been properly made, including cattle for European troops, through the Department of Grain Agent and contractor for public cattle.

4. You should take public money as much as may be necessary.

5. You must preserve most perfect discipline and good order in the detachment.

6. You should exert your own utmost endeavours to conciliate the chiefs and inhabitants of the country, with the help of officers and men under your command.

7. You should address friendly letters to Sikh chieftains possessing the country through which you pass or adjacent to your route informing them of the march of your detachment and requesting them for supplies.

8. You should correspond daily with Metcalfe, with Headquarters and with Colonel Marshall.

9. You should not advance beyond Patiala, unless urged by Metcalfe to

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do so.

10. On no account you should cross river Satluj without further orders from headquarters.

11. If Ranjit Singh had not withdrawn his troops from Ambala, you should ask the commander of Ranjit Singh at Ambala to withdraw immediately across the Satluj. If he did not comply, you should attack his troops.

12. If your force is not adequate, you should ask Colonel Marshall at Chilkana to join you with his force.

13. If Ranjit Singh's troops had withdrawn from Ambala, you should send a sufficient patrol to find out the truth.

David Ochterlony at the head of 3,000 troops crossed river Yamuna at Buria Ghat and encamped on the right bank at Dadupur on 16 January, 1809. Ambala was vacated by Ranjit Singh's men and Rani Daya Kanwar restored as its ruler by Ochterlony. By passing through Patiala, Nabha and Amargarh, Ochterlony arrived at Malerkotla on 8 February. He restored the Nawab's villages to him. Ochterlony reached Ludhiana on 18 February. Raja Bhag Singh of Jind handed over Ludhiana to him for establishing a cantonment on a monthly rent of Rs. 500. Major-General St. Leger was on his way to join Ochterlony. Still more troops were moving to Rewari, Meerut and Saharanpur to reach Ludhiana in an emergency.

Ochterlony was cordially received all the way from the Yamuna to the Satluj. The people were wonder-struck to see the discipline in the British army. They did not plunder people, and caused no damage to the green crops of wheat, gram, mustard and sugar-cane. Whenever any damage took place, the chaudhris of the villages were summoned to the camp in the evening, and whatever amount of damage they specified was at once paid. No eatable was taken gratis. Everything was paid for. The chiefs made humble submission individually as well as collectively in a gathering at Patiala and accompanied him at the head of their troops to Ludhiana.

Censure of Ochterlony: His Resignation and Restoration

Ranjit Singh made his last attempt to win over Sikh chiefs. He sent special envoys to them making all sorts of tempting offers. Nobody responded. The Maharaja summoned Metcalfe to a meeting of his council. He asked whether Ochterlony's force was sufficient to meet the French danger. Metcalfe replied that the French danger had disappeared and Ochterlony was there to meet his aggression.

Ranjit Singh realized that the game was over. He thought he might

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secure better terms from a military officer than a political diplomat. He sent his vakils, Sada Singh and Nizam-ud-din Kasuriya to wait on Ochterlony and arrange matters in such a way as to preserve his prestige among the Sikhs. They met Ochterlony at Patiala and delayed his march by five days. They assured him of Ranjit Singh's friendly cooperation and complained against Metcalfe's cold and reserve nature. The Government took a serious objection to Ochterlony's conduct for receiving Ranjit Singh's deputation when an authorised envoy was carrying on negotiations. His action was severely condemned. The Colonel did not like this censure and submitted his resignation. It was accepted and Lt. Col. Hutchison was appointed to succeed him. But it was felt that such an able and experienced officer was necessary at this juncture. He was persuaded to withdraw it.

Ranjit Singh's Force at Phillaur

Diwan Mohkam Chand was at Phillaur and Ranjit Singh was at Amritsar. He assembled his troops and military stores at that place. Metcalfe reported on 6 February, 1809, that Ranjit Singh was determined to cross river Satluj to oppose Ochterlony. In that event it should be considered a declaration of war against British Government. He continued:

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> "The approach of the British Army has occasioned great alarm among the Raja's troops on the Satluj. A very considerable diminution of the Dewan's army has in consequence occurred. Several of the chiefs have quitted it on various pretences, and many of the soldiers have deserted, without taking the trouble to assign any pretence". He thought that Diwan's army might disappear altogether.

The Akali Incident at Amritsar

The Akalis did not like Metcalfe's English and Muslim soldiers living in their holy city eating beef and going about everywhere. The Muslim festival of Moharram fell on 25 February, 1809. Some of Metcalfe's bodyguards were Shias. They prepared a *tazia* or an imitation coffin of the founders of their sect, Hasan and Husain, placed on a frame of wood. Accompanied by the English band they were taking it into a procession to bury it in the graveyard. They were passing by the derah of Akalis. They attacked the procession with rods, sticks and swords. Some sepoys were wounded. More Akalis joined them. They rushed upon the Muslim soldiers with swords and spears. Then with Metcalfe's consent Captain Popham attacked them. The trained soldiers fought so well that the

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Akalis took to flight. On hearing this news Ranjit Singh galloped off from Gobindgarh fort with 500 sowars. After pacifying the Muslim troopers he visited Metcalfe in his tent. He expressed regret, and offered money and presents to all the soldiers individually. The guilty Nihangs were imprisoned. Giani Gian Singh condemns the behaviour of Akalis whom he calls "vulgar of the highest degree (*parle darje ke jahil*), cruel (*be raham*), and villainous (*jindbad ke bhare hue*)".[1]

The Akali incident led Ranjit Singh to accept all the terms of Metcalfe. His final protest that the British military post should be established at Sirhind and not at Ludhiana was flatly turned down by Metcalfe. Thus Ranjit Singh was forced to yield wholly and completely to British terms. Faridkot and Khai were evacuated on 2 April, 1809, and the Treaty was signed at Amritsar on 25 April, 1809.

Why Ranjit Singh Yielded

1. Ranjit Singh was convinced of the invincibility of the British army. Sardesai says that the Maharaja had gone to Lord Lake's camp on the banks of river Beas in disguise. He was deeply impressed with the discipline and organisation of British forces. He had also seen that a small band of Metcalfe's sepoys had dispersed a large number of Akalis.
2. He knew his own weak position. The subdued chiefs were disaffected. His army was still in the making.
3. The Cis-Satluj chiefs had deserted him and had joined the British. The old ruling families of Patiala, Nabha and Jind were not prepared to submit to Ranjit Singh whom they considered an upstart.
4. Patiala, Nabha and Jind had been deeply alarmed at Ranjit Singh's conquest of Faridkot and imposition of heavy fine on Malerkotla.
5. The British Government was resolute and firm in its demands.
6. Ranjit Singh also feared that in case of war, the British Government would extend protection to the Muslim chiefs of Kasur, Jhang, Multan, Peshawar and Kashmir.
7. He was very much afraid of Rani Sada Kaur's intrigues.

Treaty of Amritsar, 25 April, 1809

Whereas certain differences which had arisen between the British Government and the Raja of Lahore have been happily and amicably

[1]*Panth Parkash*, pp. 895-96.

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adjusted and both parties being anxious to maintain the relations of perfect amity and concord, the following Articles of Treaty which shall be binding on the heirs and successors of the two parties, have been concluded by Raja Ranjit Singh on his own part, and by the agency of Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, Esq., on the part of the British Government.

ARTICLE 1

Perpetual friendship shall subsist between the British Government and the State of Lahore. The latter shall be considered with respect to the former, to be on the footing of the most favoured powers, and the British Government will have no concern with the territories and subjects of the Raja to northward of the river Sutlej.

ARTICLE 2

The Raja will never maintain in the territory occupied by him and his descendants, on the left bank (the eastern side) of the river Satluj, more, troops than are necessary for the internal duties of that territory, nor commit or suffer any encroachments on the possessions or rights of the Chiefs in its vicinity.

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ARTICLE 3

In the event of a violation of any of the preceding Articles, or of a departure from the rules of friendship on the part of either State, this Treaty shall be considered to be null and void.

ARTICLE 4

This treaty, consisting of four Articles, having been settled and concluded at Amritsar, on the 25th day of April, 1809, Mr. Charles Theophilus Metcalfe has delivered to the Raja of Lahore a copy of the same, in English and Persian, under his seal and signature. Mr. Charles Theophilus Metcalfe engages to procure, within the space of two months, a copy of the same duly ratified by the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, on the receipt of which by the Raja, the present Treaty shall be deemed complete and binding on both parties, and the copy of it now delivered to the Raja shall be returned.

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Signature and Seal of Raja Runjeet Sing
(Sd.) Minto

Seal and Signature
of C.T. Metcalfe
Company's Seal

Ratified by the Governor-General in Council on the 30th May, 1809.

On the 12th June this ratified treaty was sent to Raja Ranjit Singh through Lieutenant-Colonel Ochterlony. On the same day Octherlony issued a proclamation to the Cis-Satluj chiefs declaring them under British protection.

Significance

The British Government

1. The British Government gained a vast territory lying between the Yamuna and the Satluj by a mere stroke of the pen without firing a single shot.

2. They admirably succeeded in their imperial policy of 'Divide and Rule' by creating a rift between Majha Sikhs and Malwa Sikhs.

3. They torpedoed the establishment of a united Sikh state on their northern borders.

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Ranjit Singh's main emphasis was that being the master of Lahore and Amritsar, the political and religious capitals of the Sikhs, he had the right to claim headship of all the Sikhs on both sides of the Satluj. Metcalfe argued that the Cis-Satluj region never formed a part of the Panjab. Under the Mughals the Sirhind division was included in the Delhi province. The British Government was the successor of Mughals and Marathas. Hence this area belonged to them. It was only under Ahmad Shah Durrani that the Sirhind division was included in the Panjab for seven years only from 1757 to 1763. Besides Phulkian chiefs did not form a part of the Dal Khalsa. They never attended any meeting at Amritsar, and they offered allegiance to Delhi.

4. Panjab became a buffer state between the British dominions and the French and Russian ambition.

5. They won the full support of the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs which lasted for nearly 140 years upto India's independence in 1947.

6. This treaty enabled the British to surround the Sikh kingdom by controlling Shimla Hills, Bahawalpur, by conquering Sind, and by interfering in Afghanistan.

7. In case of even a slight infringement of the terms by the Lahore

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Durbar, it gave an excuse to the British to declare war upon the Sikh kingdom. Thirty-six years later Panjab was squeezed like a lemon.

8. By this treaty the English had taken possession of Ranjit Singh's mind and soul, and thereby had reduced an independent king to the status of a vassal.

Ranjit Singh

1. This treaty shattered Ranjit Singh's dream of uniting all the Sikhs under one banner.

2. It limited Ranjit Singh's eastern boundary on the Satluj for ever.

3. The chief factor was protection of the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs. Their territory extended from the neighbourhood of Rupar to the vicinity of Firozpur. The Maharaja should have demanded the common border between these two points. By agreeing to the whole course of river Satluj as his eastern boundary he lost his claim over Shimla hills, Bahawalpur and Sind, and he was surrounded by the British territory on the east, south and west.

4. His eastern frontier having been firmly secured, he could devote his entire energy and resources for expansion to the north-west and south-west.

5. The Maharaja saved his infant state from destruction in case of war with the British.

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6. It signified recognition of a powerful independent Sikh State by the greatest and strongest power in India, on equal basis, and it served as a moral boost for Ranjit Singh to become a great potentate in reality.

7. The British Government undertook not to interfere in the territory and the people in Ranjit Singh's domain to the north-west of the river Satluj.

8. It also signified that the British Government would not support any claim of Afghanistan Government to any part of territory occupied or conquered by Ranjit Singh.

9. Having secured his eastern frontier Ranjit Singh conquered Multan and Kashmir provinces of the Durrani kingdom. This increase in his power alarmed the British. In the conquest of Hazara and Peshawar they encouraged Sayyid Ahmad to put an obstacle in the way of Ranjit Singh. On Ranjit Singh's victory over him, his plan of further conquest of eastern Afghanistan from the Khaibar Pass to Jalalabad was checked by direct interference by Lord Auckland.

10. In Sind he was forced to give up claim to Shikarpur and admit British supremacy over Sind.

11. Ranjit Singh must be lamenting over his blunder for having given

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Ludhiana to Raja Bhag Singh. The Raja, on the contrary, must be feeling jubilant and overjoyed for having taken revenge for the murder of his sister by the Sukarchakias

The Cis-Satluj Chiefs

1. This treaty saved the Cis-Satluj states from extinction except under the Doctrine of Lapse.

2. It ended their freedom and independence. It led to their complete subordination to the British, and their mutual warfare came to an end.

3. After annexation of the Panjab in 1849, Sikhism had received a terrible jolt. The Phulkian chiefs preserved it intact. The Sikh religion, language, literature, customs and manners flourished not only in the Cis-Satluj region, but in the whole Panjab and other parts of India due to the influence of Patiala, Nabha and Jind with Hindus, Muslims and the British Government.

4. In this respect the contribution to Sikhism by Phulkian Chiefs lasting for nearly 150 years is greater than that of Ranjit Singh during his rule of forty years. In fact Ranjit Singh's contribution to Sikhism had been undone during the decade after his death.

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Bhag Singh of Jind

Bhag Singh joined Ochterlony's force at Dadupur on 18 January, 1809. To please Ranjit Singh, Bhag Singh persuaded Ochterlony to meet the Lahore agent. This brought ensure of the general who submitted resignation but was prevailed upon to withdraw.

Ochterlony reached Ludhiana on 19 February, 1809. Bhag Singh delivered Ludhiana to Ochterlony for his camp and establishment of a British cantonment for Rs. 500 as monthly rent. The cantonment had two objects: (1) To keep a watch on Ranjit Singh. (2) To exercise effective control over Cis-Satluj chiefs in their secret parleys with Lahore.

Bhag Singh outwardly fully supported Ranjit Singh, yet he was not prepared under any circumstances to lose the goodwill of the British authorities as well as of the chiefs of Patiala, Nabha and Kaithal. Besides in his heart of hearts he disliked the Sukarchakias for the murder of his sister.

Further inwardly he did not approve Ranjit Singh's policy of aggression and elimination of weaker chiefs. Like other Cis-Satluj chiefs be firmly believed that one day Ranjit Singh would deprive him of everything on the principle "Kingship knows no kinship".

Ranjit Singh tried with Raja Bhag Singh's help to establish his

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authority over the Cis-Satluj region. Bhag Singh played his part so dextrously that he proved himself a far greater politician, diplomat and statesman than his nephew. He hated the Sukarchakias deeply for accusing his sister, Raj Kanwar of unchastity and infidelity and for their heinous crime of murdering her. It was a great disgrace to the princely family of Jind in particular and to the Phulkian house in general. His means were too meagre to retaliate openly, so he had to resort to the dark intrigues of diplomacy. Bhag Singh won Ranjit Singh's full confidence during Holkar-Lake episode, and to a greater degree the goodwill of the British authorities in 1805-6.

Bhag Singh invited the Maharaja to arbitrate between Patiala and Nabha in the dispute over a village, and got the largest share in the loot of the Maharaja, including the most strategic place of Ludhiana. In two more expeditions of Ranjit Singh, Bhag Singh obtained the lion's share in the plunder.

Bhag Singh was through and through a loyalist of the British Government. He played the leading role in persuading the British authorities at Delhi and other places on both sides of the Yamuna to take over the Cis-Satluj region under their protection.

Bhag Singh was the real soul behind the Samana conference which passed a formal resolution offering submission of Cis-Satluj chiefs to the British Government against Ranjit Singh.

In April, 1808, Bhag Singh tried to create a rift between the Governor-General of British India and Ranjit Singh. In that year the Maharaja had planned to visit Hardwar on the occasion of Kumbh fair. The Governor-General had allowed the Maharaja and had made necessary arrangements for his reception at Hardwar. Bhag Singh frightened the Maharaja that he would be taken prisoner if he went there. The Governor-General conveyed his displeasure to Ranjit Singh.

In January, 1809, Bhag Singh joined Colonel Ochterlony's force on the Yamuna and accompanied him to Ludhiana to expel Ranjit Singh from the eastern bank of the Satluj if he would come there.

To crown all, he placed Ludhiana at the disposal of British Government for a nominal rent of Rs. 500 a month for the establishment of a British political and military post. In due course of time Ludhiana became a nest of intrigues by British officials in their scheme to seize Panjab, and they admirably succeeded in their objective. Bhag Singh died in 1819.

Comment

Ranjit Singh's policy towards the British was farsighted, shrewd,

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sagacious and statesmanlike. He knew his limitation, which was a splendid qualification in a great man. His acceptance of river Satluj as his eastern boundary by the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809 did not imply his weakness. It was the result of his shrewd analysis of the political situation. Like a genuine and practical politician, he knew the strength of the British Government as well as his own. He realized that the British had triumphed over all the Indian princes. The Muslim Nawabs of Karnatak, Bengal and Oudh, the Mughal Emperor of Delhi, Rohillas and Marathas had fallen before them. Besides his main objective was to put an end to foreign invasions from the north-west. For that purpose peace with the British was essential. Ranjit Singh's opposition to the British in 1809 would have ruined him. It would have deprived the Khalsa of the glorious laurels won by them in the forbidden land across river Indus. Besides the evil day of British annexation was postponed for forty years.

If Ranjit Singh had seized the Cis-Satluj Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot, they would have disappeared along with Panjab in 1849. These states nursed and protected Sikh religion, their language, literature, customs and manners for another one hundred years, and kept the flag flying aloft.

By accepting the Treaty as a whole without the slightest modification shows the intellectual bankruptcy of the Maharaja, his Foreign Secretary Faqir Aziz-ud-din and other heads of various departments. Ranjit Singh lost the Shimla hills, the holy place of Paonta, Bahawalpur state and Sind.

This treaty enabled the British to surround Ranjit Singh's Panjab on the east, south and west by controlling Cis-Satluj region, Bahawalpur and Sind, and by interfering in Afghanistan ending in the First Anglo-Afghan War, to the great discomfort of Ranjit Singh's successors.

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CHAPTER 16

Events Leading to the Field of Cloth of Gold, 1809-1831

Twenty-two years was the period of suspicion,
Both sides were full of great apprehension;
Ranjit Singh was ready to march to Sukkur,
He was checked by the meeting at Rupar.

Activities of the Two Governments

The treaty of Amritsar, 1809, was effected by the demonstration of British military power. It created distrust and suspicion in the mind of Maharaja Ranjit Singh about the intentions and motives of the British authorities. There was a perpetual fear that the British Government was bent upon extension of their dominions to the west of river Satluj.

Immediately after the departure of Charles Metcalfe on 1 May, 1809, Ranjit Singh put his forts at Phillaur and Amritsar in the best possible condition of defence. Stronger walls were rebuilt. Deep and wide moats were added to both.

The British authorities considered Ranjit Singh thoroughly unreliable. The British officers on the Panjab frontier were instructed to watch the activities of Ranjit Singh. In case of any infringement of the terms of the treaty, they were required to demand immediate redress. They were particularly to see that the Maharaja or his officers did not encroach on the rights and territories of the chiefs and sardars to the south of river Satluj. Sir David Ochterlony laid in supplies and threw up defensive lines at Ludhiana. The British Government was sensitive to the appointment of Diwan Mohkam Chand whose attitude was definitely anti-British, as the Governor of the Jalandhar Doab with his headquarters at Phillaur.

Both sides tried to find the working of the mind of each other through

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exchange of letters, complimentary presents, deputations and by making regular contacts between the British political agents at Ludhiana and the Lahore State. This suspicion lasted till 1831, when by a special request at Rupar, Ranjit Singh obtained from Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General, a document assuring perpetual friendship between the two governments.

The two governments remained busy in different fields of conquest. The British were involved in wars in the east and south, and the Maharaja on the west and north. The British fought the Nepal war in 1814-16, Pindari war in 1817, Maratha war in 1818, subjugation of Rajasthan in 1820, First Burmese war in 1824-26 and establishment of second capital at Shimla in 1827-28. Ranjit Singh seized Attock in 1813, Multan in 1818, Kashmir in 1819, Peshawar was made tributary in 1822 and remained busy in Sayyid Ahmad's Jihad in 1827-31.

By 1820 the British had become the paramount power in India, except in Panjab and Sind. To the north of river Satluj Ranjit Singh had become supreme upto Karakoram, Khaibar Pass and the Sulaiman mountains. He was dreaming of occupying Sind. The British were greatly alarmed at his growing power and decided to contain him. This objection was achieved in 1831 at the field of cloth of gold.

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Lord Minto's Present of a Carriage, 1811

In March, 1811, Ranjit Singh received a present from Calcutta sent by Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India. It consisted of a carriage on springs which made sitting very comfortable. This highly ornamental carriage was used for a few days as a novel plaything. Then it was placed in the great arsenal at Lahore, and remained neglected. For its proper use good roads were essential. As they were very bad in the Panjab, and Ranjit Singh was not prepared to improve them for fear of facilitating the invader, the vehicle soon went out of order, and became unfit for use. Ranjit Singh, however, sent an agent to Calcutta to acknowledge the present and to convey the thanks of his Highness.

Colonel Ochterlony's Visit to the Panjab, January-February, 1812

Prince Kharak Singh's marriage was to take place in the first week of February, 1812, with Chand Kaur, daughter of Jaimal Singh Kanahya of Fatahgarh in Gurdaspur district. The Maharaja invited Colonel Ochterlony, British Political Agent at Ludhiana, to grace the occasion. A special officer was sent to Ludhiana to conduct Ochterlony to Lahore. The Colonel was requested to bring with him a gun for the inspection by the

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Maharaja. The Colonel, with a small escort and the gun, and accompanied by the Rajas of Nabha and Jind and the Bhai of Kaithal, crossed the Satluj on 23 January, 1812, and reached near Amritsar on 28 January. The Maharaja received him with full honours (*istiqbal*), at the head of his court and other sardars, who had been invited to attend the marriage. Sada Kaur and her two grand children did not come, as the Maharaja had not given recognition to her grandsons, Sher Singh and Tara Singh. At a formal gathering the Maharaja sat in a golden chair and Colonel in a silver chair. The Colonel presented to the Maharaja one elephant, one horse, a tray containing gems and a pearl necklace, a turban beset with jewels, a plume, an English sword, and four trays containing garments, nine trays containing garments with two pieces of jewellery to Diwan Mohkam Chand, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, Devi Das and four others respectively. The Maharaja sent Rs. 500 daily for entertainment to Colonel Ochterlony's camp.

The marriage ceremony was performed at Fatahgarh. It was concluded on 6 February, 1812. The whole cavalcade returned to Amritsar. After paying respects at Hari Mandar and Akal Bunga, all of them came to Lahore. The Maharaja spared no pains in honouring Ochterlony. He showed the Colonel, in opposition to his ministers, all his troops, the drill of the newly raised battalions, every part of the Lahore fort, his treasury and toshakhana and all other notable places in the capital.

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Jaimal Singh presented to Kharak Singh Rs. 50,000 in cash, and paid Rs. 15,000 daily to Ranjit Singh's retainers. Rama Nand Sahu's account showed that Ranjit Singh had spent two lakhs of rupees on his son's marriage.

Considerate Policy of British Government

On the whole the British Government adopted a considerate policy towards Ranjit Singh. In 1809, shortly after the Treaty of Amritsar, the Gorkha General Amar Singh Thapa, proposed to Ochterlony a joint expedition to the Indus. The British declined it flatly. On the contrary they offered to assist the Maharaja to chastise the invading Gorkhas in the hills and plains of Sirhind allowing him to cross the Satluj in this enterprise.

Raja Sansar Chand Katoch and Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan in 1810, Wazir Fatah Khan of Kabul in 1813-14, Jai Singh Atariwala in his defection from the Maharaja in 1822, and the nobles of Kashmir made proposals for alliance and assistance; the British Government rejected them.

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In 1822, Sada Kaur was imprisoned by Ranjit Singh and her estates and property were seized. Wadni situated to the south of the Satluj was occupied by his troops. The British agents at Ludhiana held the view that she represented independent interests of the Kanahya Misl, and therefore, had a right to their protection. They ejected the Sikh troops. Ranjit Singh represented the matter to the Governor-General and secured possession of Wadni in 1828.

In December, 1825, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia fled to south of the Satluj and asked for British help. He was assured of English protection in his territory in the Sirhind province only. Captain Wade through his personal influence secured his safe return in 1827.

In 1828 Anirodh Chand Katoch escaped to the British territory with his widowed mother and sisters. The Maharaja confiscated his possessions. Anirodh Chand in vain tried to secure British aid in the restoration of his estates.

About the same time Qutb-ud-din of Mamdot petitioned for British protection because his territory lay to the east of the Satluj. It was declined.

A dispute arose as regards Anandpur and Chamkaur. The Maharaja's claim was recognised.

Ranjit Singh fell seriously ill in 1826. At his request Doctor Murray of the Army was sent to Lahore where he stayed for eight months.

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The Maharaja's Policy of Full Regards

Ranjit Singh showed full regard to the British authorities and in observing the terms of the treaty. In September, 1813, certain thieves of Firozpur escaped to Bhatinda in British territory. Rani Lachhman Kaur, the ruler of Firozpur, requested help from Diwan Mohkam Chand who was then at Kot Kapura. The Diwan sent Mustafa Khan Jamadar at the head of 200 footmen to capture them. When this news reached Ranjit Singh, he said the Diwan had done a very improper thing, and at once issued a letter to him to recall his men, and to abstain from such a course in future. In February, 1819, Desa Singh Majithia crossed river Satluj to invade Bilaspur. He was immediately recalled, and ordered Desa Singh personally to offer an apology to Captain Ross, British Political Agent for hills stationed at Subathu. In July, 1820, Mudaji Bhonsle, called Appa Sahib, ex-Raja of Nagpur, came in disguise to Amritsar. He was driven away. Moorcroft was warmly received and allowed to pass through the Panjab to Ladakh and Kashmir.

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The British Plan of World Domination

The Duke of Wellington's victory at the battle of Waterloo over Napoleon in 1815 was one of the greatest events in British history. According to Warner, Marten and Muir, the Duke "represented the stiff Toryism of the old school". The British statesmen took five or six years in settling the effects of 22 years war in their country. The Industrial Revolution had started first of all in England. As a result of it the wealth of the whole world was pouring into England. In early twenties of the nineteenth century they formed a plan for world domination. Sir Lepel Griffin admits that the chief objective of the British Government "was the commercial and colonial supremacy of the world".

In Europe their policy was to maintain the balance of power, and to see that the combined navies of any two countries did not exceed that of Great Britain. Further the Industrial Revolution which had began first of all in England should not be allowed to slacken its rate of growth and development in order to attract world's wealth towards England. In North America the British possessed Canada. In South America they held British Guiana. Their further progress in the latter continent was checked by the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. It laid emphasis on the principle that America was for Americans, that the U.S. Government would not permit a European power to encroach upon any country there. In Africa the British began from Capetown which they had seized from the Dutch called Boers, in 1814. They were steadily and slowly advancing in the occupation of Australia and New Zealand.

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For expansion in Asia the British possessed a very strong base in India. Their Indian capital was at Calcutta. From there they began extension towards South-East and the Far East. In 1826, Lower Burma was seized. The Opium War was thrust upon China in 1839 and Hongkong was acquired in 1842. Further penetration into China continued slowly and gradually.

The Second Capital at Shimla, 1827

As regards the British plan to extend their influence in the north-west of India, a second capital was established at Shimla in 1827. Lord Amherst was the first Governor-General of India to spend the summer months there in 1827. He arrived at Shimla in the beginning of April.

Deputation to Lord Amherst, April, 1827

Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent a deputation to greet him. It consisted of Diwan Moti Ram and Faqir Imam-ud-din. They were asked to drop a hint

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about the Maharaja's intention to conquer Sind. The Maharaja's presents consisted of a tent made of the finest Kashmir shawls for the British King and five beautiful fleet-footed horses, and a majestic elephant for Lord Amherst. They reached Ludhiana on 6 April, 1827. Amherst had collected about a score of hill rajas. The mission was received in a grand durbar. Regarding Sind he gave no reply. The mission left Shimla on 6 May, 1827.

In return the Governor-General deputed Captain Wade and Dr. Gerard to Lahore with presents. This deputation was received by the Maharaja on 29 May, 1827, at Amritsar. They left Amritsar on 15 June, and arrived at Ludhiana on 19 June, 1827.

Lord Combermere

In 1828, the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Combermere, spent summer at Shimla. Ranjit Singh sent a complimentary envoy to convey his congratulations. Combermere expressed a desire to visit Lahore, personally to thank the Maharaja, but the victor of Bharatpur was not invited to visit Lahore.

The Astrologers

Lord William Bentinck was the next Governor-General to arrive at Shimla in 1831. Wade told Ranjit Singh that the Governor-General desired to meet him, but the invitation should come from Lahore Durbar.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh summoned his astrologers and asked them whether his interview with Lord William Bentinck at Rupar would be fruitful or not. They told him that the result would be in his favour, but advised him that at the time of interview he should present one apple to the Governor-General and one to his Chief Secretary. If the two apples were at once accepted, he was to consider it a good omen and that the result of the meeting would be favourable. This news reached Shimla secretly. Ranjit Singh knew that even the topmost secret did not remain a secret.

Ranjit Singh's Second Mission to Shimla, 1831

Ranjit Singh formed a deputation to wait upon the Governor-General at Shimla, and extend the invitation for a meeting with the Maharaja. It consisted of Faqir Aziz-ud-din, head of the mission, Diwan Moti Ram, Hari Singh Nalwa, Lahna Singh Majithia, Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia and Dhanna Singh Malwai. They were accompanied by 1129 men and 9 elephants. Aziz-ud-din was asked to sound the views of the Govenor-General to allow Ranjit Singh to conquer Sind.

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On their arrival at Shimla they were provided 153 pots of sweets. They were given a grand reception on 23 April, 1831. A company of Gorkhas gave them a salute. Aziz-ud-din made a *sirwarna* of Rs. 3,100. They offered presents to the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief. The Governor-General made a *sirwarna* to the members of the deputation of Rs. 2,500. He sanctioned Rs. 250 and 65 trays of sweets and other articles as their daily allowance.

One day they were invited to a dance and music function. The Governor-General's wife and 50 other European ladies sang with instruments and danced in such a way that the men from Lahore, "became spell-bound like pictures on the wall" according to Sohan Lal Suri. There was an exchange of rich presents on both sides. The deputation left Shimla on 8 May, 1831. The Maharaja had given Hari Singh Rs.10,000 for expenses. He spent Rs. 7,040 and returned the balance to the Lahore treasury.

Regarding Sind, William Bentinck gave no reply, but he agreed to meet Ranjit Singh in order to lull him into the dreamland.

The English King's Presents

When Lord Amherst returned to England in 1828, he carried with him the shawl tent presented by Ranjit Singh for the King of England. In 1830, it was decided to send from England a return present of a team of cart-horses, four mares and one stallion, on behalf of King William IV to the Maharaja, accompanied by a letter of friendship from Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control.

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When they reached Bombay, Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General, instructed Sir John Malcolm, Governor of the Presidency, to forward the horses in boats up the Indus, and to obtain information about its possibilities as a highway for commerce. Politically the suspected designs of Russia in alliance with Iran made it highly desirable. Further the British Government was intent on forestalling Ranjit Singh regarding his designs on Sind. Sir John Malcolm added his own present of a carriage to the dray-horses. In the words of Murray it was "as useless an article to Ranjeet as the mares".

Alexander Burnes' Mission to Lahore

Lieutenant Alexander Burnes, Assistant to Lieutenant Colonel Pottinger, Political Agent at Kachh, was chosen the bearer of the presents. Ensign Lackie accompanied him as a second man. The Mirs of Sind were not consulted or informed. Burnes entered in one of the mouths of the Indus

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at Karachi in December, 1830. A Sind officer asked Burnes to wait there till he received orders from Haidarabad. He sailed on 10 March, 1831 and reached Haidarabad, 200 km away in 40 days, covering on an average 5 km daily. From Haidarabad to Mithankot, a distance of 500 km took 45 days, average 11 km daily.

Ranjit Singh's Interest in Burnes' Mission

Ranjit Singh's anxiety to please his masters knew no bounds. When Burnes was still in Kachh in January, 1831, the Maharaja ordered Diwan Ajodhia Prashad to leave Lahore for Mithankot post haste to receive him. No detail should be omitted in providing him entertainment and all other things that he might require, and his pleasure must be sought above all things. Burnes must be paid Rs. 500 daily at every stage between Multan and Lahore and he must be supplied all the requisites. The Diwan was to receive Burnes 150 km beyond the boundary of Maharaja's country. Diwan Sawan Mal was ordered to render all possible service to Burnes, and to submit a certificate of satisfaction from Burnes. Lahna Singh Majithia was ordered to go to Multan to escort Burnes under protection of Sham Sota's platoons. On Burnes' arrival at Multan, a salute of 11 gunfires must be offered with a purse of Rs. 2,500 and baskets of sweets. Chuni Lal, head of *harkaras* was deputed to rush towards Sind to send news about Burnes. Tej Singh was ordered to erect thatched bungalows at every stage for the stay of Burnes, to perform *sirwarna* of Rs. 250, and pay Burnes Rs.1,500 daily. Burnes was a mere Lieutenant then almost the lowest position in military ranks.

Burnes' Reception at Lahore

Ranjit Singh had obtained the Governor-General's permission to have Captain Wade at Lahore to help him in giving reception to Burnes. Wade left Ludhiana on 7 July, 1831. The Maharaja made arrangement for Wade's reception at Serai Dakhni, Kapurthala, Vairowal, Jandiala, Amritsar, Waineki and Shalamar Gardens. Wade and Murray reached the Gardens on 16 July. They were received by Raja Gulab Singh, Diwan Moti Ram and Jagat Singh Atariwala with presents. At Lahore fresh presents were given. The Maharaja presented Wade Rs. 5,000 and Murray Rs. 525. They were entertained by dancing girls in their best and pompous dresses.

On 18 July Burnes was received at a distance of 5 km from Lahore by a guard of cavalry and infantry accompanied by Faqir Aziz-ud-din, Raja Gulab Singh and other sardars.

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When Lord Ellenborough's letter was being read by Aziz-ud-din, and there occurred words such as treaty or friendly alliance, artillery shots were fired.

The horses were greatly admired for their size and uncommon height. One of them was lost on the way in the Indus, and another fell ill at Lahore and died. The stallion was immediately put into breaker's hands, and taught the artificial paces. This animal with its enormous head and coarse legs always stood either in the palace yard or before Maharaja's tent as a show piece, decorated with a golden saddle and necklaces of pearls and diamonds. The mares were kept in stables and were treated with absolute indifference. Wade spent his time in listening to the *Umdat-ut-Twarikh* read out by Sohan Lal, the author of the book. He was so much pleased with it that he invited him to Ludhiana to read it for him there.

Burnes at Shimla

Burnes stayed with Ranjit Singh from 18 July to 16 August, 1831. The Maharaja according to his habit must have asked Burnes hundreds of questions about Sind, and found out its military and economic position. On the question of Sind he was thoroughly frank and straightforward. He had suppressed Sayyid Ahmad's Jihad and had established his firm hold upto the Khaibar. He was now ready to march into Sind. He was telling every Englishman or European visitor from Wade to Lord Amherst, that he intended to conquer Sind. This must have been told to Burnes also freely and without any reservation. Burnes, while giving a detailed account of his journey to Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General, at Shimla, must have informed him about Ranjit Singh's desire to conquer Sind. Wade must have informed the Governor-General that Ranjit Singh might extend his authority beyond the Khaibar Pass on account of Dost Muhammad's anxiety to seize Peshawar. It was, therefore, resolved by the foreign office that Ranjit Singh must be checked in both the places. In the uneventful life without warfare he would dissipate himself and would meet an early death. Ranjit Singh usually undertook inspection tours and great campaigns after Dasahra. It was decided that the meeting between the Governor-General and the Maharaja should be held after Dasahra. Ranjit Singh would be kept busy in the following two months in preparations and the Governor-General would try to bring the Mirs of Sind in some sort of political or commercial relationship with the British Government. Thus Ranjit Singh's ambition in Sind would be foiled.

Lieutenant Colonel Pottinger, British Political Agent at Kachh, was

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ordered to prepare the ground for a formal treaty with the Mirs regarding expansion of trade and commerce by the Indus. Captain Wade was instructed to extend British influence in the Panjab with a view to absorb it in the British India.

Burnes was told to pick up colloquial Persian and to get accustomed to the Muslim way of life in eating, dressing, saying prayers, and in urinating while sitting, and observe Muslim festivals. He was to visit Afghanistan and Turkistan and other places upto the borders of Russia.

The Meeting at Rupar, October 26 to November 1, 1831

The Maharaja began preparations for the meeting with the Governor-General at Rupar on the banks of river Satluj. On 27 August, 1831, Chet Singh commandant was ordered to lay a strong bridge at the ferry. Mian Samadju was ordered to make 17,000 uniforms, shirts, and a large tent of broacade. Three lakhs of rupees were distributed among troops who were to go to Rupar as a present so that they would look cheerful with bright faces.

On 14 October, 1831, Wade, Murray and Boigne came to Amritsar to accompany the Maharaja to Rupar. The Dasahra festival was celebrated at Amritsar on 18 October. Only Prince Kharak Singh was allowed to go with the Maharaja. At Hoshiarpur the French traveller Jacquemont was introduced to the Maharaja. They reached Rupar on 25 October, 1831.

The British troops from Meerut and Karnal were ordered to reach Rupar by 20 October. While passing through the Sikh states cows and oxen were killed for beef. The Sikh chiefs raised objection. They were told that "it was no business of thiers to enquire what was done within the precincts of a British camp". (Prinsep). Lord William Bentinck reached Rupar on 22 October, 1831.

Ranjit Singh's escort consisted of 10,000 of his best horse and 6,000 trained infantry and artillery men. He set up his camp on the right bank of river Satluj at Kathgarh. The two storeyed silver bungalow on wheels was put up on the top of a hillock. Raja Dhian Singh was appointed as a guard at the bridge.

A British deputation headed by Major-General Ramsay, brother of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Dalhousie and Governor-General's chief Secretary Prinsep, visited the Maharaja, and fixed the meeting with the Governor-General on the morning of 26 October. Prince Kharak Singh with six principal sardars called upon the Governor-General about the same time to present the Maharaja's compliments.

On the morning of 26 October, a British deputation called at the

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Maharaja's camp to conduct him to the Governor-General's place. The Maharaja started at sunrise, crossed over a bridge of boats with an escort of 3,000 cavalry and 800 infantry.

Across the bridge there was an open plain, at the end of which stood the Governor-General's camp. From the bridge to the camp a street of British troops was formed. The Maharaja passed through this lane. In the middle of this street he was received by the Governor-General, who saluted him by taking off his hat. Ranjit Singh offered him an apple, which was gladly accepted. The Maharaja then placed a necklace of pearls around the neck of the Governor-General with his own hands, and put into his other hand some precious jewellery. The Maharaja then shifted into the Governor-General's howdah. They proceeded to the tents of audience. The Maharaja was welcomed by Lady William Bentinck and other European ladies. In the outer tent all the English officers had gathered. All stood to meet Ranjit Singh. In the next tent the Maharaja and his chosen chiefs were seated in chairs. Ranjit Singh and his chiefs were all dressed in yellow (*basanti*) or the colour of spring. They wore highly polished armour and were profusely adorned with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, on their heads, breasts and arms. The frank manners of the Maharaja made the meeting lively and hilarious. The presents to the Maharaja consisted of manufactured articles from Calcutta, Dhaka and Banaras, guns, jewellery, a fine Burmese elephant, two fine thoroughbred young horses from the Hisar stud.

Dresses of honour and presents for the heir apparent and chiefs were displayed. When the meeting was over Ranjit Singh awarded Rs.1,000 to European singers and dancing girls. The Maharaja ordered his men to take charge of all the presents, and send them to his camp. At the door of the tent the Governor-General bade him farewell. He returned to his camp at noon.

On 27 October the Governor-General returned the visit. Ranjit Singh received him at the bridge of boats. He was escorted by Lancers. preceded by a mounted band. Ranjit Singh was highly impressed with the band. The bridge was crossed. The Sikh soldiers formed the lane from the bridge to the Maharaja's camp. It consisted of fine *qanats* and *shamianas* of red colour of beautifully worked shawls. The sheet over the heads of both Heads was of inlaid pearls and jewels. Ranjit Singh introduced his chiefs. Each came forward. Ranjit Singh called out his name. They presented gold ducats as *nazars* to both the potentates. The horses (trappings) (superb) were then brought. The Governor-General was entertained in the upper storey of the silver bungalow and other Englishmen in the

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lower storey. One hour was spent in conversation. Then the presents for the Governor-General were laid out. Afterwards he took leave.

The Chief Secretary, Prinsep, wanted to see the parade of Maharaja's battalion of dancing girls. Ranjit Singh pointed out their commander, subedar, jamadar and standard bearer. Then the girls sang and danced. Bano Motianwali was delcared the best trooper. The Governor-General rewarded them Rs. 1,000.

On other days evening entertainments and fireworks were exchanged. On 28 October an Indian painter was sent by the Governor-General to paint the portrait of the Maharaja who rewarded him with Rs. 100. The Maharaja was deeply impressed with the parade of British troops accompanied by their band. He offered Rs. 15,000 to the troops, of which Rs. 11,000 were accepted.

On 29 October, Lord William Bentinck and 25 Englishmen and some ladies were invited to attend an entertainment in the evening. Immense lights were illuminated and fireworks were played. Wine flowed freely. Dancing girls under the command of Maqish gave a magnificent performance. The Maharaja gave away presents to Lord and Lady Bentinck, their daughter and other ladies.

On 31 October, the last day of the meeting, Ranjit Singh came across the river to observe artillery practice. The British troops effectively fired to a distance of 1,000 paces. Ranjit Singh fired at an umbrella from a 6-pounder. He exhibited feats of horsemanship. At full gallop he picked up a banana at the point of his bayonet. A little farther in the same gallop he cut a number of lemons into two, and still farther at a break-neck speed of the horse drew with the point of his sword three parallel lines on the bottom of a jug fixed in the ground. The other sardars also showed their feats. The Governor-General presented the Maharaja, 9-pounder horse artillery guns with horses and equipment complete. Besides, a complete model of an iron suspension bridge prepared at Calcutta was also given. At the last meeting Lady Bentinck made the Maharaja eat something and drink wine from her hands.

Governor-General's Memorial Letter

At Ranjit Singh's special request, the Governor-General issued a memorial letter for the Maharaja. It stated:

> According to the previous agreement friendship between the two great governments would remain firm from generation to generation and that everyone of the English Sahibs would carry on friendship with the

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family of Maharaja Bahadur, according to the new and old agreements, and no default of any kind would be allowed to take place.

On 1 November, 1831, both the camps broke up, and the parties marched in opposite directions. The camping ground is rightly called "The field of the cloth of gold".

Reference to Sind

On one of the days of the meeting Ranjit Singh invited two British officers whom he considered to be in the confidence of the Governor-General. One of them was Chief Secretary Prinsep and the other was Major-General Ramsay. He put them several questions about Sind. He said the vakils of the Mirs of Sind were present in his camp. He asked if he should introduce them to the Governor-General. The Maharaja said Sind was a very rich country and a great treasure had been accumulated there during the past 100 years. He added there was no standing army and no good soldiers. In an emergency the people were called from the plough to fight an enemy. He wanted British approval to conquer it. It was an act of sheer folly.

It appeared to the Secretary to the Governor-General that the Maharaja suspected British designs on Sind and that he wished to be invited in the joint conquest of that country. Both the British officers put the Maharaja at ease without giving him any hint regarding the British views or plans on Sind.

Prinsep says that before Ranjit Singh's arrival at Rupar the Governor-General had issued instructions to Lieutenant-Colonel Pottinger in Kachh to form commercial treaties with the three independent Mirs for the free navigation of the Indus and to make river Indus the channel for extensive commerce with the adjoining states and even Europe. Prinsep adds that the object of negotiations with the Mirs of Sind was also "in some measure political". After prolonged discussions a treaty was signed with Mir Murad Ali of Haidarabad on 20 April, 1832. Lord William Bentinck ratified it in his camp at Shimla on 19 June, 1832.

Results of the Meeting at Rupar

Both the heads of government drew their own conclusions and immediately put them into execution before leaving the field of the cloth of gold at Rupar.

The Governor-General

1. Lord William Bentinck was convinced that Ranjit Singh was

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determined to abide by the terms of the Treaty of Amritsar, 1809. He saw that Ranjit Singh was very anxious to conquer Sind with the approval of the British Government. This permission would never be given. The best way was to forestall him in a fait accomplice. Plans were made to surround Panjab by Sind and Afghanistan which were to be brought within the British spheres of influence. He was not expected to live long on account of his fast living. The most sparkling wines and the most dazzling damsels plus the hottest medicines and big dozes of opium which he freely and readily consumed were breaking down the Maharaja's steel frame. The British officers were, therefore, instructed to give Ranjit Singh no cause of annoyance as far as possible.

2. The heir apparent, Prince Kharak Singh, was not found capable enough to control his ministers, generals and the Sikh army. Himself mediocre person he would rely on persons inferior to himself so that they would satisfy his ego. In the presence of brilliant men he would consider himself too insignificant. In a word he would not be able to preserve the Sikh kingdom.

3. As regards Ranjit Singh's ministers, courtiers and commanders, those present at Rupar, were all pro-British, interested in their power and pelf.

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4. In consequence the task of preparing the ground for the occupation of the Panjab without any fighting was assigned to Captain C.M. Wade, Political Agent at Ludhiana. His immediate task was to thwart the Maharaja's plan for the conquest of Sind.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh

1. Maharaja Ranjit Singh clearly understood that Sind must go out of his mind for ever.

2. He was full of fear regarding his own kingdom. He fully realized that the conquerors of the rest of India and victors of Napoleon in Europe could not be defied by him. He thought that the safest policy for him was to remain on the best of terms with them. He felt that his policy of pleasing the English and yielding to them on every point might weigh with them to treat his successors favourably.

3. The memorial letter which Ranjit Singh had obtained from Lord William Bentinck was worth a paper to be thrown in the wastepaper basket. Did Ranjit Singh maintain lasting friendship with anyone of his subdued chiefs in spite of his solemn oaths on the holy *Granth* and in the Hari Mandar or in gurdwara at Tarn Taran? Could he expect fidelity from the greatest imperialists in the world? It was all in vain.

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Comment

In diplomacy Ranjit Singh proved a complete failure. Diplomacy is not a field for frankness. Ranjit Singh had been telling every Englishman that he wanted to conquer Sind. Why should he seek British permission to do so? In fact, throughout his reign he behaved as if he were a vassal of the British Government. Immediately after the acquisition of Attock in 1813, he should have directed his steps towards Sind. His army was almost intact. His expenses of the campaign had been more than fully made up by the booty acquired there. The British Government was involved in the Gorkha War and the Third Maratha War in India, and in life and death struggle with Napoleon in Europe.

The conquest of Sind would have made the Sikh government a sea power. This would have enabled Ranjit Singh to establish diplomatic relations with other European powers and the United States of America. On account of Monroe Doctrine of 1823 there were no good relations between England and the United States. The possession of Sind might have given a longer lease of life to the Sikh State after Ranjit Singh.

In a word the Rupar meeting was absolutely unnecessary, useless, meaningless, worthless, a fraud, a snare to deceive and make a fool of the simple Jat peasant of the Panjab, who knew only how to fight.

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Bano Motianwali was considered the best singer and dancer for entertaining Lord William Bentinck at Rupar. At another function Maqis gave a magnificent performance in peacock dance. Both of them drew the highest praise from the onlookers.

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CHAPTER 17

Wade's Supremacy at Lahore, 1831-1839

Narm Chob ra kiram me khuad.
(Soft wood is eaten by worms.)

Only a few cases are given below
(*Mushi-e-az kharware*)

The thirties was the period of Captain Wade,
A master magician of first grade;
Such an iron grip he laid,
A mighty monarch vassal was made.

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Section A

Captain Wade

Captain Wade joined at Ludhiana as Political Agent on 28 February, 1823, and held this office for 17 years. His main duty was to keep strict watch over the activities of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He created a network of spies and posted them at all important places in the kingdom of Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh

In a fight the physical victory over an opponent is bad for the victim, victory over his mind is worse and victory over his soul is the worst. The defeat of the body can be reversed with the help of the mind, and the defeat of the body and mind can be prevented by the vigour of the soul. But the victory over one's soul incapacitates him for ever. This was the case with Ranjit Singh. After the Treaty of 1809, he gave up his mind and soul to the British. His body was already in the grip of the bottle and the

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belles.

Man ke hare har hai Baba, man ke jite jit.

On 8 December, 1810, Ranjit Singh remarked that "nobody had the power to oppose them."[1] (the British).

On another occasion he observed: "I might perhaps drive the British (*Ungrez Bahadur*) as far as Allyghur (Aligarh, head office of French generals under Daulat Rao Sindhia), but I should be driven back across the Sutlej and out of my kingdom."[2]

On 15 June, 1838, Ranjit Singh observed: "The glorious Sahibs are impartial and do not discriminate between their own men and the strangers at the time of administering justice)."[3]

On 23 September, 1838, the Maharaja said, "The English are perfect in wisdom."

It does not mean that he should have adopted servility in his relations with them. He was an independent sovereign of a big kingdom. In dealing with his superiors, he must have shown that he had some iron in him. Alexander the Great was the Emperor of a vast empire extending from Macedonia in Europe to river Jehlam. Porus was the chief of one or two districts. He kept Alexander at bay for 3 months. When defeated he demanded treatment as a king for himself.

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Captain Wade exercised complete hold over Ranjit Singh's mind and soul. The Maharaja treated him as if he were a British Resident and his kingdom was a Protected Indian State like Haidarabad or Patiala. Ranjit Singh invited him several times in the year to participate in his hunting trips and convivial parties.

Wade and his assistants and friends travelled in every part of his kingdom from village to village, not only once, but a number of times. They gathered complete information about the Sikh kingdom in every aspect. Every foreigner recommended by Wade was granted large sums as daily allowance for months and months with free supplies of everything. The Maharaja demanded certificates of satisfaction by every visitor from his officers including his governors, ministers and royal princes. In case of any report of dissatisfaction dismissal and imprisonment lay in store for the unfortunate official or a prince.

The Maharaja sent a couple of young men to Ludhiana to learn

[1]Monograph, XVII, 10.
[2]M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, II, 35.
[3]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 465.

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English. Wade frightened them that they would have to embrace Christianity in order to learn this language. They fled back to Lahore.

In the borderland of Sind under the Maharaja Wade asked him not to punish the rebels, and the Maharaja obeyed.

Wade was mainly responsible for the occupation of Firozpur and Shikarpur.

Wade did not allow Ranjit Singh to have any contact with Nepal. When a representative of the Nepal Government managed to cross river Satluj, Ranjit Singh asked Wade whether he should meet him or not. The reply was in the negative.

Wade checked the Maharaja from extending his territory beyond Khaibar Pass and Ladakh.

All foreigners in the service of the Lahore Durbar were Wade's creatures, and they were often given promotions and jagirs on Wade's recommendation.

For a large part of the year Wade lived in Lahore, or toured in parts of the Panjab. The Maharaja consulted him in every detail of administration. Ranjit Singh's Prime Minister Raja Dhian Singh who protested was treated by the Maharaja as his office superintendent only. Wade's presence at Lahore for long periods encouraged Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, to appoint Wade permanently at Lahore, but Ranjit Singh did not agree.

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A few examples picked up at random are given below:

Amritsar, 31 May, 1827: On this day Wade arrived at Amritsar. On the first day, the Maharaja presented him with Rs. 5,000 in silver coins, Rs. 5,000 in gold coins, 2,000 baskets of fruits and vessels of sweets.*[1]

Game, Lahore, 25 March, 1831: On 25 March, 1831, Ranjit Singh hunted a big lion and two lionesses. He ordered that this happy news should be conveyed to Captain Wade at Ludhiana "who was an intimate and sincere friend".[2]

Wade at Adinanagar, April-June, 1831: Jagat Singh Atariwala and Faqir Shah Din riding an elephant in silver howdah and 25 horsemen with Jamadar Khushhal Singh went to receive Captain Wade at Phillaur. He was presented Rs. 1,100 and other articles such as butter, curd, lambs, milk, sweets, etc. The other stages of halt fixed by the Maharaja were at Phagwara, Kartarpur, Tanda, Mukerian and Talabpur. Wade was given at

*A vessel for sweets was an earthen *matka* containing about 20 kg of different varieties of sweets and so was the weight of a basket (*tokra*) of fruits.

[1]Gopal Singh, *A History of the Sikh People*, p. 485.

[2]*Umdat*, Rng. trans., p. 20.

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every place Rs. 500 and all other things as given above. At the last place, Adinanagar, the Maharaja personally looked after him.[1]

Adinanagar, 19 May, 1831: Ranjit Singh sent large sums of money, sweets, fruits, etc. to Wade and Murray. Wade's *khidmatgar* was given Rs. 500, other two servants Rs. 200 and Rs. 100, Murray's attendant got Rs. 200.[2] Beli Ram was ordered to give daily to Wade Rs. 500 and Rs. 225 to Murray, alongwith trays of sweets, baskets of fruits, milk, butter and all other things. One horse with gold threaded saddle was presented to Wade.[3]

Dancing girls, Adinanagar, 22 May, 1831: Dancing girls wearing gold threaded suits of various colours, dressed in man's garments, holding swords, bows, guns and spears in hands like soldiers, hair decorated with gold ornaments and jewellery, entertained Wade and Murray with their sweet songs and bewitching dances.

Sohan Lal, the court chronicler, records:

> At the sight of the performance of the dancing girls even Venus on the third heaven was wonder-struck. The audience stood holding its breath like pictures and the onlookers shut their mouths in silence in their enjoyment of the sight.

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Drinking revellery lasted 4 or 5 hours. The Maharaja granted Rs. 1,100 to the dancing girls.[4]

Music and dance, Adinanagar, 27 May, 1831: A show of music and dance was arranged for the entertainment of Wade. Wine intermixed with Bedmusk flowed freely. The Maharaja poured it in cups with his own hands, while Dhanno and Nabbo, the sweeties, offered the cups to Wade and Murray. Rs. 550 were granted to the two dancing girls.[5]

Farewell gifts to Wade, Adinanagar, 9 June, 1831: 22 rolls (*than*) of pashmina, 5 articles of jewellery, a sword with a bejewelled handle, a golden harness, a lancet with a jasperstone hilt, and one horse with a golden saddle. The Maharaja put on a diamond ring on Wade's finger with his own hand and granted Rs. 500 to his horseman.

Farewell gifts to Murray: 11 garments, 3 articles of jewellery, a sword with a well-hammered hilt, a golden harness, one horse with a gold-

[1]Ibid., p. 29.
[2]Ibid., p. 35.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Ibid., pp. 36-37.
[5]Ibid., p. 42.

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threaded saddle, and Rs. 250 in cash.

Gifts to attendants of Wade: Munshi Najafullah, Ram Dayal Harjas Rae, Sahar Mal and Vakil of Shuja-ul-Mulk–7 garments each, Jamadar of platoons, Subedar, Jamadar of chaprasis–5 garments each, newswriter of Ludhiana and darogha–3 garments each, 22 robes of honour were granted to the vakils of sardars who had accompanied Wade.[1]

On his way back Wade halted at Mukerian, Urmur Tanda, Kartarpur, Phagwara and Phillaur. At every stage Wade was presented Rs. 500, Murray Rs. 125, along with all necessary things.[2]

Wade's advice sought: On 13 August, 1831, the vakil of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, called on the Maharaja to seek his help for the restoration of Kabul to the Shah. The Maharaja referred the matter to Wade at Ludhiana. On his advice the matter was dropped.[3]

Wade at Amritsar, October, 1831: Wade left Ludhiana on 9 October, 1831. Under Maharaja's orders, Wade was presented Rs. 1,200 for entertainment. Raja Gulab Singh received him at Amritsar, and made a *sirwarna* of Rs. 25. He was presented 500 gold ducats and 125 trays of sweets. Murray and Jacquemont and Bean, received Rs. 500 and 25 trays of sweets each. The Maharaja received them with a salute of cannon.[4]

Wade's Visit to Lahore, January, 1832: Elaborate arrangements were made for Wade's reception and his participation in the hunting party with the Maharaja in the jungles of Sharakpur and Shahzadabad.[5]

Drinking party, Lahore, January, 1832: In the drinking parties of Ranjit Singh, Dr. Gerard, Captain Wade and Dr. Murray "gave way to the noisy pleasure of wine and festivity in the Samman Burj".[6]

Complaint, Lahore, 25 February, 1832: Warris and Nazim and other Panches of Sharakpur reported devastation of their country by the troops of the chiefs. Ranjit Singh got angry with Dhian Singh and asked why destruction had taken place. Dhian Singh replied that the said chiefs did not obey his orders.

Captain Wade was present. He said that devastation was taking place, and the Maharaja was not carefully attending to his subjects. He further said that if British troops entered an enemy country, they would not create such destruction.[7]

[1]Ibid., p. 51.
[2]Ibid.
[3]Ibid., p. 70.
[4]Ibid.
[5]Ibid., p. 114.
[6]Mohan Lal, *Travels*, p. 22.
[7]Ibid., p. 126.

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Zamindars, Lahore, 26 February, 1832: Captain Wade secured the Maharaja's permission to interview some zamindars in the presence of Faqir Aziz-ud-din. The following conversation took place:

What do you eat?
We live on milk and take very little of grain.
How many buffaloes each of you have?
From 100 to 200 and sometimes even more.
How do you discover that a buffalo has gone astray?
By tracing and following the footprints.
How do you determine the time in the middle of the night for going about?
We judge our road by the position of stars.
How do you find out the distance and time in a cloudy night?
We trace our way by recognizing trees.

Journey: Wade undertook a journey from Ludhiana to Mithankot in 1832-33.

Paralysis: In 1834 Ranjit Singh had a serious stroke of paralysis. Wade expected his death was near. He suggested to the Governor-General "whether in the event of Ranjit Singh's death, it would not be proper to adopt the precaution of advancing a part of the Ludhiana force to Firozepur, backed by a regiment of cavalry from Karnal". He suggested that his own office should be shifted from Ludhiana to Firozepur.[1]

Spy at Lahore: The *Delhi Gazette* in its issue of 24 June, 1835, wrote: "Besides this native spy at Candahar, the Government has a Hindoo emissary, acting in the same capacity at Lahore".

Peshawar, 12 October, 1835: Amir Singh and Gulab Singh commanders defied orders of Tej Singh at Peshawar. The Maharaja reprimanded them and immediately wrote to Wade to know how the English law treated such officials.[2]

No English knowing man in the Panjab, October, 1835: Wade sent a book in English pertaining to the regulations of the troops of platoons and horsemen. The Maharaja asked Ventura to translate it. He replied that in the Panjab there was not even one person to translate it.[3]

Mules: Wade purchased 366 mules.[4]

[1]Wade's despatch to W.M. Macnaughten, dated 14 February, 1838, quoted by Gopal Singh in *A History of the Sikh People*, pp. 520-21.

[2]Gopal Singh, op. cit., p. 251.

[3]Ibid., p. 254.

[4]Ibid., p. 358; *Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 369; *Advice Sought from Wade*, pp. 375, 390, 431.

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Travel: Wade travelled across Multan province in 1835.[1]

Firozpur

On 11 November, 1835, the Maharaja was informed that Sardarni Lachhman Kaur of Firozpur had died on 4-5 October, without any issue, and that the English had immediately occupied the town. Raja Dhian Singh protested saying that it was not proper for the British to come 75 km from Lahore. The Maharaja replied on account of friendship distance did not matter. In reply to Bhai Nidhan Singh's remarks the Maharaja said "he had nothing to do with Firozpur". He further said "that the relations of unity between the two great Governments were such that Khalsaji had no need of thinking about Firozpur, for the houses of the friends are one and the same, and Firozpur could still be regarded as if it were within the territory of the Maharaja".

A letter from Kishan Chand, the Maharaja's envoy at Ludhiana, was received on 17 December, 1835, saying he had represented the case of Firozpur to Captain Wade who said the relations of friendship and unity between the two Governments were well-established. Kishan Chand's another letter came on 31 December, 1835. It stated that Mackeson was coming to the Maharaja to explain Firozpur case. Mackeson reached Lahore on 7 January, 1836, and presented himself before the Maharaja on 10 January. The Maharaja talked to him at length about Wade, Burnes and Metcalfe, but made no mention of Firozpur whatsoever.

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Chuni Lal, Firozpur: "Lalah Chuni Lal stated that at the time when the cantonment of Ferozpur was founded the late Maharaja raised no objection that had he done so it would never have been established.[1]

Lahore, 9 February, 1836: A letter was issued to Missar Rup Lal, informing him that Captain Wade was coming to Lahore with Benson and Mackeson, Gujar Singh and Rae Gobind Jas. He was to supply them at Phillaur with Rs. 2,100 in cash, 51 vessels of sweets, and the same things at Jalandhar and Kapurthala.[2]

Anton: On 18 June, 1836, Anton came with a letter from C.M. Wade. The Maharaja sent Rs. 250 as entertainment. At the interview he was granted Rs.1,000 and one *doshala*.[3]

On 29 July, 1836 Anton was granted a robe of honour of 9 garments, one pearl necklace, one turban, gem, one plume, one armlet and Rs.1100 in cash as farewell gift.[4]

[1]Gopal Singh, op. cit., p. 246.
[2]Ibid., p. 273.
[3]Ibid., pp. 292-93.
[4]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., pp. 300, 328.

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Suleman, 18 June, 1836: Suleman was a reliable servant of Wade. He presented the Maharaja with a letter of recommendation. He was given a letter for the Governor of Kashmir to release his estates. He was given Rs. 300 to meet his travelling expenses.[1]

Wade's interference in Maharaja's affairs, 31 January, 1837: Captain Wade told Faqir Aziz-ud-din to convey to the Maharaja "that Diwan Sawan Mal must establish Bahram Khan* in his own house and should not interfere with him at all".[2]

Shikarpur, 5 February, 1837: Captain Wade met the Maharaja at Balwal and said "that in view of the relations of friendship between the Maharaja and the glorious Sahibs, Shikarpur was to be left in the possession of the Nazims of Sindh as before and that the Maharaja must not have any objection to it because the pleasure of the glorious Sahibs depended on his non-interference with the Nazims of Sindh?"

On 6 February, he again waited upon the Maharaja at Sorhian, and said "that he, as a beautiful king of the whole world, would and must be kindly disposed towards the Nazims of Sindh and should release the country of Shikarpur and restore it to its previous position."[3]

Prince Pratap Singh, 2 September, 1837: Kanwar Pratap Singh presented some gold ducats as *nazar*, and said that Raja Sarup Singh of Jind was very friendly and steadfast, and wished to present himself to the Maharaja with great humility. The Maharaja replied that he would be invited after consulting Captain Wade.[4]

Maharaja refers his State matters to Wade, 5 September, 1837: Raja Kalan stated that important leaders of the Khaibar Pass had come to the Maharaja and requested him to establish his sway at Ali Masjid. The Maharaja said that a Thana would be established there after consultation with Captain Wade.[5]

Service, 14 March, 1838: An Englishman came from England to Ludhiana, and told Wade he wanted service under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Wade assured him of service in the Sikh army, because the Maharaja told him "he liked to have Sahibs in each platoon". The Maharaja agreed to employ the new Sahib as desired by Wade.

Students learning English at Ludhiana, 16 April, 1838: The Maharaja sent Bishan Singh to learn English to Ludhiana. He acquired some

[1]Gopal Singh, op. cit, p. 293.
*Bahram Khan was the chief of Baluch Mazari tribe in the borderland of Sind.
[2]Gopal Singh, op. cit., p. 323.
[3]Ibid., p. 324.
[4]Ibid., p. 374.
[5]Ibid., p. 375.

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knowledge of English. On the arrival of Jamadar Khushhal Singh at Bharatgarh on his way to Hardwar, the boy took leave from his school for one day to see the Jamadar. The Jamadar took the boy with him to Hardwar and afterwards presented him to the Maharaja. The boy said he gave up his studies because Captain Wade told him "that English could not be properly learnt without the change of religion", and "he had left his study out of that fear alone". The boy further stated that the son of the Raja of Ladwa had given up his studies "out of the same fear". The Maharaja reported this case to Wade, assuring him "that their houses were one and the same and this matter did not create the least difference".[1]

Thomson, 19 September, 1838: On 19 September, 1838, without the Maharaja's permission, Wade sent an Englishman (Thomson), "for the collection of grain and hiring of camels and oxen required for the English troops".[2]

Diwan Sawan Mal informed the Maharaja that an Englishman had come to Multan to purchase grain. The Maharaja replied that he must help the Sahiblog in the purchase of grain at cheaper rates. He should be carefully looked after, and all his requirements should be made available to him.[3]

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Cis-Satluj Village, 23 September, 1838: The village Mangali was situated near Sanchwal in Maharaja's territory. Near it lay village of Barari in British territory. The zamindars of Mangali, owing to Maharaja's pro-British policy behaved most submissively even when five of their men had been murdered by the people of the other village on 23 September, 1838. The Maharaja ordered Wazir Singh and Jawahar Singh Bistri to accompany Lala Harbans Rae with 25 soldiers of the Najib platoon to settle the boundary according to the wishes of Captain Wade. Lala Harbans Rae was instructed "to attend to the demarcation of the boundaries according to the wishes of Captain Sahib".[4]

Rae Gobind Jas was reprimanded to have settled the boundary without consulting Wade. "He should send a letter of satisfaction from Captain Sahib to this effect."[5]

Cis-Satluj case, 26 September, 1838: On 26 September, 1838, Sulaiman, a servant of Wade, submitted a letter from Captain Wade saying that two English letters sent by him to Firozpur had been lost at Dharamkot, and

[1]Ibid., p. 425.
[2]Ibid., p. 526.
[3]Ibid., pp. 528, 537.
[4]Ibid., p. 529.
[5]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., pp. 7, 530.

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Maharaja's Kardars were showing negligence to recover them. Immediately royal parwanas were issued to Sardar Nihal Singh Ahluwalia, the Kardars, Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Missar Rup Lal and Sardar Lahna Singh Majithia that the stolen letters must be traced and sent to Captain Wade, "since the satisfaction and pleasure of Captain Sahib was paramount with the Sarkar".[1]

Grain, October, 1838: Wade demanded huge collections of grain in the territory of Prince Sher Singh and Sardar Nihal Singh Ahluwalia, at the rate of Rs. 22 per maund. The response was not encouraging. On 9 October, 1838, the Maharaja said that "the goodwill of Captain Sahib was desirable over all other matters".[2]

On 11 October, 1838, the Maharaja ordered Prince Sher Singh and Ahluwalia Sardar to press Kardars to collect grain quickly. They replied that people were not willing to sell grain at Rs. 22 per maund.[3]

Women grinder, 12 October, 1838: Wade required 500 grinding stones and village women to grind flour. The Sarkar sent parwanas to Kardars to provide both.[4]

Camels, 18 October, 1838: Wade demanded 5,000 camels for the carriage of goods. The Maharaja ordered Kardars for the collection of camels.[5]

Agents, 29 October, 1838: Wade's agents were procuring grain from all over the Panjab. Kardars were ordered not to charge any octroi duties.[6]

Transport, 8 November, 1838: Wade required 15 ponies and 50 camels for his own luggage. Camels were supplied by Rup Lal, and ponies were given from royal topkhana at Lahore.[7]

Fodder: Wade wanted 10,000 maunds of fodder. Jawand Singh was ordered to supply it.[8]

Ventura, 24 November, 1838: On the recommendation of Wade the Maharaja granted a jagir to Ventura worth Rs. 2,500 per annum.[9]

Thomas, 1st December, 1838: As desired by Wade, a letter was sent to Diwan Sawan Mal to give Thomas Sahib two lakhs of rupees in whatever manner he wanted.[10]

[1]Gopal Singh, op. cit., p. 530.
[2]Ibid., p. 535.
[3]Ibid., p. 536.
[4]Ibid., p. 537.
[5]Ibid., p. 541.
[6]Ibid., p. 540.
[7]Ibid., p. 547.
[8]Ibid., p. 572.
[9]Ibid., p. 556
[10]Ibid., p. 572.

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Passage through the Panjab, 5 December, 1838: General Ormond was allowed to proceed with English troops to Kabul through the Panjab.[1]

Durbar Sahib, 12 December, 1838: While visiting the Durbar Sahib Wade was given by the Maharaja Rs.1,000 and 25 vessels of sweets.

Sawan Mal, 2 January, 1839: Sawan Mal had supplied to Thomas grain worth 5 lakhs of rupees.[2]

Lahore, 13 January, 1839: Sarkar said that the pleasure of Colonel Wade was paramount with him.[3]

Prince Peshaura Singh dismissed: Prince Peshaura Singh, son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was the Governor of Attock when Wade arrived there. He did not receive Wade by a salute of gunfire. Wade complained to the Maharaja about the Prince's incivility. Sometime afterwards Captain Ferris arrived at Attock. He found the bridge of boats on the Indus broken. Peshaura Singh gave him no help. Ferris complained to Wade. Wade again complained to the Maharaja who at once dismissed the Prince though he had governed Attock efficiently for five years and gave him no post afterwards.[4]

Payment of dues: The Maharaja sometimes delayed payment to traders, merchants and bankers for goods and loans supplied to the Government. To get the arrears cleared the complainants sought intervention of Captain Wade. Seth Mirza Mal of Churu approached Wade for such a purpose. On his recommendation, the Maharaja promptly instructed Sardar Nahar Singh Jatha and Missar Rup Lal to settle the account.*

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Section B

Some European Travellers in the Sikh Kingdom

Maharaja Ranjit Singh permitted Englishmen and other Europeans to travel freely without any reservation at state expense for months and years with complete servility on the part of his officers.

Anderson, 1836

Anderson came from Peshawar and met the Maharaja on 24 January, 1836 at Lahore.[5] On 4 February, 1836, he gave an account of his visit to

[1]Ibid., p. 582.
[2]Ibid., p. 608.
[3]Ibid., p. 615.
[4]Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, p. 180, n. 229; Panjab Government Records, Broadfoot to Curria, 26 July, 1845, book 167, letter 12.
*Jugal Kishore Gupta, in his paper on Seth Mirza Mal of Churu.
[5]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 270.

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Kashmir.[1]

Burnes, 1832

Alexander Burnes was invited to join a hunting party. An extremely beautiful hunting camp was established in the jungles of Shaikhupura district. A large pavilion of red cloth surrounded by numerous *qanats* was the Maharaja's encampment. His chiefs and troops were encamped in picturesque groups around it.

The suite of tents pitched for Alexander Burnes was most elegant. They were made of scarlet and yellow cloth. The floor was covered with Kashmir carpets and French satin. "It was with some reluctance that I," writes Burnes, "set foot upon such valuable materials. In each tent there was campbed, with curtains of yellow silk".[2]

New tents were provided each day. The next day's tents of Burnes were made of Kashmir shawls, 14 feet square. Two of these tents were joined with superb materials. The intervening space was shaded by a lofty screen supported on four massive poles adorned with silver. The shawls of one tent were red, of the other white. In each tent stood a campbed with curtains of Kashmir shawls. It gave Burnes an impression of a fairy abode rather than an encampment in the jungles of the Panjab.[3]

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Clerk, Henry Lawrence and Murray

In May, 1839, Clerk who was appointed at Ludhiana and Henry Lawrence who was at Firozpur with Dr. Murray, visited Lahore. On 6 May, 1839, Missar Beli Ram presented Clark Rs. 2,100, 130 vessels of sweets, 2 bottles of wine, 2 bottles of Bedmusk and 2 bottles of rosewater, and to Henry Lawrence, the future defacto Maharaja Rs. 500, 21 vessels of sweets, one bottle of wine and one bottle of Bedmusk. Henry Lawrence wanted to return to Firozpur the same day. At his departure he was given 11 garments, one pearl necklace worth Rs. 500, one armlet worth Rs. 200, one bejewelled underturban worth Rs. 150, one sword with a bejewelled sheath worth Rs. 300, one horse with a golden saddle and Rs. 200 as *sirwarna*. Murray left Lahore on 12 May, 1839, for Firozpur. His farewell gifts included Rs. 500 in cash, one pearl necklace, one pair of gold bangles, one underturban, 9 garments, and one horse with a silver saddle. Clark left on 21 May, 1839. He was given one very fine English sword, one pearl necklace, one armlet, one underturban, one ring, one sword

[1]Ibid., p. 272.
[2]*Travels*, I, pp. 19-20.
[3]Ibid., p. 220.

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with a golden sheath, one Lahore gun, 12 garments, one *doshala*, one piece of brocade, one horse with a golden harness.[1]

Hugel, 1835-36

Thanedar of Rawalpindi welcomed Hugel with 21 pots of sweets, each enough for one man to carry about half a quintal in weight, a basket of eggs, one basket of fowls, two sheep, and one bag of rupees.[2]

Jacquemont, 1830-31

Jacquemont was coming to see the Maharaja. He was received by Maharaja's officers at village Wanike. He was presented with Rs. 500 along with milk, curd, cream, lambs, chicken, grass, straw, wood and other necessary things. On 12 March, 1831, he was to be received by the Maharaja. At the deorhi or main entrance to the fort of Lahore he was welcomed by the Maharaja's dancing girls riding on elephants and horses wearing male garments with swords, arrows and bows in hands gracefully in perfect smartness. The Maharaja rose in his chair and walked upto the edge of the carpet to receive him, and taking his hand into his own, seated him in a chair. At the departure of Jacquemont on 18 March, 1831, he was given Rs. 5,000 in cash with a rich robe of honour.[3]

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Karamat Ali, 1835

Munshi Karamat Ali was the British intelligencer at Kamran's durbar, at Herat. "When at Lahore, he rejected the presents tendered by Ranjit Singh and commanded him to desist from his aggressions on the Afghans. Finding the Maharaja not perfectly compliant, he stroked his beard, and swore he would play the deuce with him when he got to Calcutta. The old prince, terrified, applied to Captain Wade at Ludhiana for protection against the Sayad".[4]

Mackeson

Mackeson was an Assistant to Captain Wade. He was coming to Lahore. Ranjit Singh appointed Faqir Shah Din and Jawala Singh Bharania to receive him at Harike on 9 December, 1832. He granted Rs. 200 daily for his entertainment. He visited Panjab again in March, 1834. He went by boat to Mithankot, situated at the confluence of rivers

[1]Ibid., pp. 662, 664, 668, 677.
[2]Ibid., p. 227.
[3]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., pp. 15, 18.
[4]Masson, *Journeys*, III, pp. 322-23.

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Indus and Satluj. Chuni Lal, head of *harkaras*, was sent to look after him. Diwan Sawan Mal was ordered on 3 April, 1834, to treat him as a special guest of the Maharaja. On 31 December, 1835, a letter from Kishan Chand, Maharaja's newswriter at Ludhiana, informed Ranjit Singh that Mackeson was coming to Lahore to settle the case of Firozpur which had been occupied by the British without consulting the Maharaja. Mackeson reached Lahore on 7 January, 1836. Khalifa Nur-ud-din was ordered to provide Mackeson with Rs. 500 for entertainment along with fruits, sugar and sweets and all other necessary things. Ranjit Singh made no mention of Firozpur to him at all. On 11 January, 1836, the Lohri day, he was given a robe of honour of 11 garments. On 16 January he was granted a robe of honour of 11 garments, a horse, a golden saddle, and Rs. 1,100 in cash. He came to the Panjab again in February, 1836, in the company of Wade and Benson. At Phillaur they were offered Rs. 2,100 in cash, 51 vessels of sweets, with same things at Jalandhar, Kapurthala and Amritsar. On 31 January, 1837 Mackeson reached Lahore, Faqir Aziz-ud-din received him with Rs. 300, sweets and fruits.

In June, 1837, he again visited Mithankot. On 13 September, 1837, Mackeson told the Maharaja that he was going to Kashmir. The Maharaja issued instructions to the governor to receive him with great respect, and to provide him hospitality and entertainments. After visiting Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet, he visited Peshawar and reached Lahore on 19 December, 1837. On 10 February, 1838, the Maharaja and Mackeson hunted together in a jungle. On 14 February, 1838, the Maharaja and Mackeson hunted again in the jungle of Mahadevi. The Maharaja sent to Mackeson's camp a few dancing girls with bottles of wine extracted from grapes and pomegranates for his enjoyment. On 16 February, 1838, they reached Sharakpur. The Maharaja granted Mackeson Rs. 250. He ordered his favourite dancing girl Sabran to go with a few other dancing girls, decorating themselves with special jewels, and applying good perfume to their bodies and clothes, and stay in Mackeson's camp. On 28 February they hunted a tiger.

Raja Dhian Singh protested to the Maharaja that he must send for Englishmen once "and that it was not proper to allow them to come everyday".

On 17 March, 1838, Maharaja and Mackeson left Lahore to visit Aulyapur, Fatahgarh, Kumar, Zafarwal, Parmandal, Jammu, Sialkot and Amritsar. On 11 April, 1838, 30 camels carried Mackeson's luggage. On 15 April, 1838, the Maharaja took Mackeson to Gobindgarh fort, and showed him all over and cannon. Mackeson was shown Durbar Sahib on

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22 April. They reached Chawinda in Sialkot district on 16 May, 1838. Mackeson went back to Ludhiana on 23 July, 1838, having stayed in the Panjab for two years and a half after visiting every part of the Sikh State.

After staying at Ludhiana for a few days he came to Firozpur and Bahawalpur. He reached Multan on 3 October, 1838. From there he went to Derah Ismail Khan and travelling through Trans-Indus territory of the Maharaja reached Peshawar on 29 April, 1839.

On 15 May, 1839, the younger brother of Mackeson was allowed to join his brother at Peshawar. On 6 June, 1839, Mackeson was in General Court's camp at Peshawar.[1]

Masson

A Mr. Louis alias Masson travelled in the disguise of a Muslim on foot without any money or luggage, all alone, from village to village for years, in the Panjab begging his food. From Panjab he went to Afghanistan "watching and reporting the movements of Amir Dost Mahumed Khan at Kabul". He published his account in 3 volumes.

Mohan Lal

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From October, 1835 to April, 1836, Mohan Lal, in the British service at Ludhiana, minutely surveyed Shujabad, Multan, Derah Ghazi Khan, Harand, Rojhan, Amarkot, Mithankot and Shikarpur. Mohan Lal wished to see the town of Shujabad. The Sikh soldiers stationed at the gate did not allow him to enter, because they suspected the Company's servants as spies. In the evening he put on dirty clothes like the inhabitants of the place, and "though trembling", entered the town. The bazars resembled the Charsu of Herat, except in cover. There were 360 shops richly stocked with goods. The houses were 3 or 4 storeys high. The palace called Saman Burj was beautiful. The town surpassed Bahawalpur, both in beauty and cleanliness. There were three guns on the rampart pointing towards west. He came out by another gate.[2]

Moorcroft

Moorcroft spent a couple of years in Ladakh and Kashmir shortly after Maharaja's conquest of the latter.

[1]*Umdat*. Eng. trans., pp. 157, 160-61, 194, 263-68, 273, 323, 324, 345, 362, 376, 383, 395, 403, 404, 409, 412, 419, 423, 440, 501, 532, 640, 658, 671, 681.

[2]*Travels*, pp. 386-87.

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Three Englishmen

On 20 February, 1839, Khalifa Nur-ud-din stated that three Sahibs had come to Lahore from Ludhiana. He had supplied them with requisites. The Sarkar ordered that they must be taken on an elephant in a silver howdah through the bazar and should be shown the fort. The senior man among them must be given one cloak, one pair of gold bangles, 7 garments and a sword. The other Sahibs should be given to each one pair of gold bangles and one cloak. All their requirements must be provided wherever they went.[1]

Vigne

First Visit to Kashmir, June, 1835-January, 1836: Vigne left Ludhiana for Kashmir on 8 June, 1835. The Maharaja issued letters to all the Kardars of Nurpur, Jasrota, Ramnagar and Jammu to provide Vigne with Rs.100 for entertainment and meet his other requirements, and to protect his person and luggage. The Governor of Kashmir was ordered to accord him a warm reception, to provide him a decent house, Rs. 500 for entertainment, vessels of sweets, 15 garments, 100 goats, and 7 garments to Mohan Lal who was with him. A certificate of satisfaction should be obtained from Vigne and forward it to the Maharaja. On 11 August, 1835, the Governor reported arrival of Vigne at Srinagar. In reply the Governor was informed that the Maharaja's pleasure depended on the complete satisfaction of Vigne. Vigne returned to Lahore and was received by the Maharaja on 12 January, 1836, the Lohri day. On 23 January, 1836, Hugel and Vigne were entertained on the Basant day.

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Lehna Singh Majithia was ordered to set-up the camps of Hugel and Vigne in the Baradari of Kaulsar at Amritsar, to show them Durbar Sahib, to get them decorated with robes of honour, to protect them from Nihangs, and obtain certificates of satisfaction from them. Letters were issued to the Kardars on the way to Phillaur and to provide them entertainment.

Second Visit to Kashmir, April-December, 1837: Vigne presented himself to the Maharaja in the village of Chhina on 10 April, 1837. Vigne then left for Kashmir. On 14 September, 1837, a letter from Vigne was received. He complained that the Governor of Kashmir was not paying him proper attention. The Maharaja sent an emphatic order to the Governor of Kashmir to send him a letter of satisfaction from Vigne. Vigne was assured of full attention and care.

Third Visit to Kashmir, Ladakh, Little Tibet and Kishtwar, 5 May, 1838

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 628.

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to 16 April, 1839: Vigne came to Lahore again in April, 1838. On 5 May, 1838, he expressed a desire to visit Kashmir and Ladakh again. Raja Dhian Singh did not approve of it.

The Maharaja granted him a cloak and Rs. 200, and a letter for the Governor of Kashmir to receive him respectfully, and entertain him to his satisfaction. On 18 November, 1838, Vigne sent a letter to the Maharaja that he had visited Ladakh and Little Tibet, Kashmir, Kishtwar, Mandi, Kulu, Kangra. On 10 January, 1839, the news from Kashmir stated that Vigne with his wife was going to Kishtwar after visiting Kashmir and other places. On 16 April, 1839, Vigne informed the Maharaja that he had visited all the places in the mountains including Kashmir, Ladakh, Tibet, Kishtwar, Mandi, Kulu, Jawalamukhi, Kangra, and many other places and had reached Ludhiana.[1]

Vigne in 1835 wrote about artisans in Kashmir:

1. A first rate shawl weaver earned one rupee daily.
2. Semi-skilled weaver 8 annas daily.
3. A beginner 2 annas a day.
4. A carpenter 4 annas a day.
5. Cutler 8 annas a day.
6. A gunsmith one rupee a day.
7. A bow and arrow maker one rupee daily.
8. Pen-case maker 4 annas daily.
9. A tailor 2 to 4 annas daily.
10. The field labourer was paid 6 seers of paddy.[2]

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Wood

On 25 June, 1838, the Maharaja allowed Wood to stay at Kala Bagh for 12 days to take measurements of river Indus.[3]

Some Opinions

Murray calls the Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh, 'The only state in India not substantially under British dominion'.[4]

In 1836, the Secretary to the Governor-General recorded his views about Ranjit Singh: "The dread in which he stands of our power may be accepted as a sure pledge that he will never suffer himself to oppose the views and wishes of the government so long as we admit him to a

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., pp. 237-38, 242, 267, 269, 270, 348, 376, 434-35, 552, 613, 649-50.
[2]Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 121.
[3]Ibid., p. 478.
[4]Murray, *History of the Punjab*, II, p. 175.

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participation of them as a friend".[1]

In May, 1838, Osborne, a member of the negotiating committee for the Tripartite Treaty, recorded in his diary: "One course to pursue on Ranjit Singh's death–the instant occupation of the Punjab by an overwhelming force and the establishment of our North-Western Frontier on the Indus. The East India Company has swallowed too many camels at this gnat."

Richard Temple stated that Ranjit Singh had "the instinctive dread of the approach of the British power"[2]

Comment

Captain Wade succeeded admirably in performing most successfully the secret duties assigned to him by Lord William Bentinck, a follower of Duke of Wellington, Prime Minister of England, 1828-30, a stiff hard Tory of the old school. Wade fully ploughed, manured, harrowed and watered the soil ready for seed to be sown. Every Englishman expected that the Sikh State would fall into their lap like a ripe fruit immediately after Ranjit Singh's death.

Wade was promoted as Major, and knighted as Sir Claude Martin Wade. Shortly afterwards he was made Lieutenant Colonel.

The European visitors and all those in Maharaja's service were preaching day in and day out the beauty of British administration from village to village right from Leh and Iskardu to Shikarpur and from the Khaibar to Phillaur and Firozpur. For example, Mohan Lal was at Peshawar from 10 to 21 December, 1833. He recorded in his diary:

"We are now among crowds of people who speak nothing but the praise of the English."[3]

Mirza Ahmad, a Kashmiri, served as a guide to Jacquemont. For his service to him, Ranjit Singh granted Ahmad a village in Kashmir, after Jacquemont had left the Panjab. "Certainly," says Hugel, "this fact is a proof of Ranjit Singh's willingness to give all facility to European travellers through his dominions."

As for Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Lion of Lahore, it is sufficient to quote Mirza Ghalib:

Ishq ne Ghalib nikamma kar diya,
Warnah ham bhi admi the kam ke.

[1]N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 82.
[2]Richard Temple, Introduction to Gardner's *Memoirs*, p. xxv.
[3]*Travels*, p. 355.

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CHAPTER 18

The Indus Treaties and Firozpur Meeting, 1832-1839

The Indus Treaties were a dead letter,
Tripartite Treaty was a fetter.
Checked Maharaja in Sind and Khaibar,
Was forced to surrender Shikarpur.
Help for the Shah was secured,
Passage for a British force assured.
Ludhiana and Firozpur sealed the fate,
Of Ranjit himself and his Sikh State.

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The Indus Treaties of 1832 and 1835

Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of British India, represented to Maharaja Ranjit Singh that the British East India Company wanted to control the lower reaches of the Indus for the expansion of its trade in that direction. It was essential for them to establish their military posts along the river bank to which the Maharaja should agree. Ranjit Singh pointed out that the demand was contrary to the treaty of 1809. Sometime afterwards the Mirs of Sind unwillingly signed the treaty.

Captain Wade pressed the Maharaja to agree to the Indus Treaty. Ranjit Singh replied he would first consult the businessmen of Amritsar. A meeting of businessmen was held at Amritsar on 25 December, 1832. Seth Mirza Mal of Churu in Rajasthan was invited to attend. As the businessmen were under obligation to Wade, they gave their consent. The Maharaja signed the Treaty. But the businessmen never sent their goods in boats for fear of plunder on the way, in spite of Wade's assurance for safety.

In 1835, another treaty was concluded with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It consisted of the following articles:

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1. A toll of Rs. 570 per boat will be levied on all merchandise in transit on the rivers Indus and Satluj between the sea and Rupar, without any consideration to the size of boats, or to the weight and value of cargo. This toll will be divided among different states in proportion to the extent of territory which they possessed on the banks of these rivers.

2. In right of territory appertaining to the Lahore Chief, both on the right and left banks of those rivers, a portion of the toll, Rs. 155/25 shall be levied opposite to Mithankot, on the former side, on boats coming from sea to Rupar; and Rs. 67/94 in the vicinity of Harike on the latter side, on boats going from Rupar towards the sea.

3. In order to facilitate realizing the toll due to different states, and for speedily and satisfactorily adjusting any disputes connected with the safety of the navigation and welfare of the trade, a British officer will reside opposite to Mithankot, and a native agent on the part of the British Government, opposite Harike, who will both be subject to the orders of the British agent at Ludhiana and agents appointed by the other states interested in the navigation (viz. Bahawalpur, Sind and Lahore) to reside at the above mentioned places, will cooperate with them in the execution of their duties.

4. In order to guard against imposition on the part of merchants in falsely complaining of being plundered of property which formed no part of their cargoes, they are required, on taking out their passports, to produce an invoice of their cargo, which being duly authenticated, a copy will be annexed to their passports; and whenever their boats may be brought to a halt for the night, they were required to give immediate notice to the thanadars or officers of the place, and to request protection for themselves, at the same time showing the passports they might have received at Mithankot or Harike, as the case may be.

5. Such parts of the 5th, 7th, 9th, and 10th articles of the Treaty of 26 December, 1832, having reference to fixing a duty on the value and quantity of merchandize, and to the mode of its collection, were hereby rescinded, and the foregoing articles substituted in their place, agreeably to which, and the condition of the preamble, the toll would be levied.[1]

(*Note*: After the death of Ranjit Singh no fresh treaties were entered into with his sons and successors, but some rates of duty on boats navigating the Satluj were agreed to with them.[2])

[1]Steinbach, *The Punjab*, pp. 139-40.
[2]Ibid., p. 141.

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Burnes' Mission to Kabul

In the spring of 1836 Dost Muhammad sent a letter of congratulations to Lord Auckland on his arrival in India as Governor-General. He wrote: "Your Lordhsip will consider me and my country your own". Auckland replied on 22 August, 1836, that he wished the Afghans "should be a flourishing and united nation". He said he would soon depute a gentleman to his court to discuss commercial topic to their mutual advantage. His real aim was to ascertain the correct position and ideas of Dost Muhammad Khan regarding the Russian expansion towards Afghanistan. Alexander Burnes who had earlier travelled right across Panjab, Afghanistan and Central Asia was appointed on a mission to Kabul. The British aim was to bring Afghanistan under their influence to check Russia on the north and to prevent Ranjit Singh from expanding beyond Peshawar towards Kabul, Macnaughten, Secretary to the Governor General, believed that in case of Ranjit Singh's advance towards Kabul, Dost Muhammad might place himself under the influence of Shah of Iran. Hence the Governor-General instructed Captain Wade in a letter of 22 August, 1836, to inform Ranjit Singh that the Government of India would not remain indifferent to his hostilities on the north-west frontier, and they would favour conciliation between him and the Amir. Under Wade's suggestion Ranjit Singh agreed to stop his activities in the Afghan territory. He ordered Dhian Singh and Khushhal Singh to write to Dost Muhammad to send his envoy to settle terms of peace between the two states. Macnaughten instructed Wade to plead with the Maharaja to agree to the moderate demands of Dost Muhammad. Burnes was also instructed to press Dost Muhammad to come to an agreement with Ranjit Singh.

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In an interview with Dost Muhammad, Burnes argued on the necessity of Amir's peaceful settlement with Ranjit Singh. Dost Muhammad pointed out that the British Government had taken Shikarpur from Ranjit Singh. Now they should prevail upon him to relinquish Peshawar for the Amir. Dost Muhammad said he would hold it as a tributary and would offer horses and Bara rice in tribute. Burnes asked if the Amir would agree to have Peshawar given to his brother Sultan Muhammad Khan. Dost Muhammad replied it was the same thing whether Peshawar was under Sultan Muhammad or the Sikhs.

Burnes wrote to Macnaughten that the Russian envoy, Captain Vikovich had come with a definite promise of help to the Amir with men and money against the Sikhs. Dost Muhammad showed willingness to get the province of Peshawar equally divided between him and Sultan

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Muhammad. Burnes recommended it to Macnaughten. Wade favoured it. The Governor-General did not agree. Dost Muhammad offered the following terms:

1. To protect Kabul and Kandhar from Iranian aggression.
2. Cession of Peshawar from Ranjit Singh to the Amir.
3. Protection in case it was restored to Sultan Muhammad Khan.

Burnes did not approve. He asked Dost Muhammad not to form connection with any other Western power. In return the British Government would smoothe his relations with the Sikhs. Then he returned to India, and Dost Muhammad made overtures to Russian agent.

The Sikh Deputation at Shimla, April-May, 1838

In 1838, Lord Auckland, Governor-General, decided to have a personal meeting with the Maharaja at Firozpur in order to confirm its absorption in the British territory and make it the starting point for the first Afghan War. Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent a deputation to Shimla to invite the Governor-General. This time Faqir Aziz-ud-din was made the head. The other members of the deputation were Ajit Singh, Karam Singh and Rae Gobind Jas. They came to Ludhiana on 24 April, 1838. From Ludhiana to Shimla there were nine stages. Passing through Rupar, Nalagarh, Subathu they reached Shimla on 2 May, 1838. Their luggage was carried by 500 men forced by Wade in *begar* at Ludhiana. Macnaughten received them on 7 May, 1838. Osborne, the Military Secretary to the Governor-General, says that in the durbar hall, Lord Auckland sat in a large guilt chair. Six senior members sat on his right in chairs. The other 12 members of inferior rank sat on the floor at a little distance. Behind the Governor-General stood his numerous officers and attendants in full uniforms. Most of the conversation took place with Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia, who had visited Calcutta earlier.

The deputation was entertained by English ladies to a feast of music and dance. They danced "in such a manner that even the houries of the heaven would feel their heart sink at their sight". There was an exchange of gifts and other civilities as usual. The farewell meeting was held on 11 May.

On their return the Maharaja asked Faqir Aziz-ud-din to tell him something about Shimla. The Faqir replied that extremely cold breeze blew there. There were about 300 *kothis* and a large number of Englishmen lived there. Auckland was 52 years old. One day while riding a horse

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presented by the Maharaja, Auckland fell down. Later on Auckland told Faqir that he had fallen deliberately to provide him with fun.

While replying to Maharaja's questions, Ajit Singh said Shimla was 150 *kos* distant, and one could reach there in 15 days. Flour was selling there at 12 seers *pakka* per rupee. There were many beggars, but no Englishman except the Governor-General, gave them even a single paisa. There were about 100 English ladies who danced with men in pairs. The son of the Commander-in-Chief also danced in the presence of his father. The Maharaja asked: Did he feel no shame in doing so in the presence of his father? Ajit Singh replied: Among the Sahibs there existed no sense of shame, reputation or name in any way whatsoever.

Macnaughten's Mission, May-June, 1838

Auckland sent a mission to Lahore to form the Tripartite Treaty between Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, Ranjit Singh and the British. It consisted of Macnaughten, Secretary to the Governor-General, as head, Captain Wade, Political Agent at Ludhiana, Captain W.G. Osborne, Military Secretary to the Governor-General, Captain G. Macgregor, Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General, and Dr. Drummond, Surgeon to the Governor-General.

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The Maharaja had established his summer capital at Adinanagar, 25 km south of Pathankot and 82 km north of Amritsar. The British Mission on its way to Adinanagar was offered prodigal entertainments at Rupar, Kathgarh, Hoshiarpur and Mukerian. They arrived at Adinanagar on 30 May, 1838. They were granted an audience in the upper storey of the silver bungalow. They were seated in golden chairs.

On 31 May, Macnaughten told the Maharaja that Burnes' Mission to Kabul had failed as Dost Muhammad insisted on getting Peshawar for establishing friendly relations with the British. Dost Muhammad had invited help from Russia and Iran to seize Peshawar. The British Government favoured Shah Shuja's restoration to the throne of Kabul, with the help of the British and Ranjit Singh. Dhian Singh showed by various special signals his complete disapprobation of the proposal.[1]

After sometime all went to Lahore where long and hectic discussions took place. All his Ministers and advisers told Ranjit Singh to reject the offer. He silenced them that he had given his assent and "he wished to hear nothing more on the said subject".[2]

[1]Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, p. 100.
[2]Ibid., p. 101.

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Shikarpur

Then there arose the question of Shikarpur. It belonged to the Maharaja. The intervening region between the boundary of Multan province and Shikarpur was ruled over by the Mazari Baluch tribe, tributary to Lahore. On 22 March, 1837, Wade and Mackeson had told the Maharaja that the real object of the British Government from the navigation of the Indus was occupation of Sind, establishment of a cantonment at Shikarpur, and control over Afghanistan through Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk. The Maharaja kept silent.

In the draft treaty Shikarpur was shown as British territory. On 6 June, 1838, the Maharaja's subdued mind flickered up for a while. He emphatically asserted that Shikarpur belonged to him, as it lay north of river Satluj. He called for the letters of the English officials written to him earlier about Shikarpur. They were read out by Bhai Gobind Ram and Faqir Aziz-ud-din. It was stated therein that the British Government had no concern about Shikarpur and other places on the western side of the Satluj. Faqir Aziz-ud-din said that Captain Wade had written in the draft of the proposed treaty "that the Maharaja would have nothing to do with the territory of Shikarpur which had passed into the possession of the Sarkar of the Sahibs". The Maharaja sent Mackeson, Aziz-ud-din and Rae Gobind Jas to Macnaughten to clarify the position of Shikarpur. Macnaughten wrote on a piece of paper that the British Government "wanted Shikarpur from the Sarkar Maharaja Bahadur at all costs".

On 25 June, 1838, Osborne, nephew of the Governor-General, was received by the Maharaja. He asked Osborne to tell the Governor-General that he had agreed to give up Shikarpur out of regard of unity and friendship for the British.

The Tripartite Treaty, 1838

Though the Treaty was made by the British, yet it was called a treaty between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja supported by the British.

Ranjit Singh did not like it because it was mainly aimed against him. Osborne wrote: "The Old Lion has turned sulky and refuses to sign the treaty, wishing to stipulate for all sorts of concessions which cannot be granted".

In agreeing to it his only consolation was that in place of hostile Dost Muhammad, he would have a British ally on the throne of Kabul, and he would be saved from frequent warfare on the north-west frontier. He also realized that he would not improve his position by remaining out of it, as the British Government was determined to use its own resources alone to

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restore Shah Shuja as the king of Afghanistan.

The Gains of the Lahore Durbar

The critics considered the Treaty "morally unjust", "politically inexpedient", and "the first stage in the course of a high-handed robbery pursued under pretexts transparently false".[1]

It is certain that the Maharaja accepted it under coercion. The Maharaja was forced to give up Shikarpur for a sum of 15 lakhs of rupees to be realized from the Mirs of Sind. The British Government guaranteed the fulfilment of its terms to the Lahore Durbar. Ranjit Singh's conquests of the Durrani territories were legalized. The foreign policy of Kabul would be controlled jointly by the British and the Lahore Durbar. The Government of Kabul would pay a sum of two lakhs of rupees annually to the Maharaja as subsidy for maintaining a force of 5,000 Muslim troops at Peshawar to help the Shah in an exigency.

The British Gains

Lord Auckland in his despatch to London on 13 August, 1838, reported the British gains as follows:

Before signing this treaty with Ranjit Singh the British relations with their neighbours were unsatisfactory. A war was possible with Burma and Nepal. Russia, Iran and Afghanistan were forming a combination against the British interests. Now this alliance would curb disaffection in the whole country. The designs of Russia and Iran would be checked. British control over Panjab would be strengthened. Some terms of the treaty were objectionable. But Ranjit Singh was a dying man. On his death nobody seemed to be capable of keeping the country in his possession.[2]

The other gains to the British were the following:

1. With the Shah on the throne, Afghanistan would become a British protected state.
2. Sind till recently was a province of Kabul. It would also belong to them.
3. As Sind and Jalalabad province of Kabul were coveted by Ranjit Singh, he would be checked in both these places.
4. Shikarpur was claimed by Ranjit Singh, but it came into British occupation.
5. Further by surrounding the Sikh state on three sides its annexation

[1]Trotter, p. 59; Hasrat, p. 171.
[2]*Bengal and India Secret Letters*, quoted by Hasrat, p. 173.

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would be easier.

6. By allowing a free passage to a British force across the Panjab, the people would be impressed or rather cowed down by the might of the British Government.

Farewell to the Mission, 13 July, 1838

After a stay of a month and a half the Mission left on 13 July, 1838. The Maharaja gave away presents to all the members and their attendants with his own hands. Osborne got a string of pearls, a chelensk of diamonds, a pair of diamond armlets, six pairs of shawls, several pieces of gold embroidered silk, a sword, one horse, with gold and velvet housings and accoutrements. The other members also were given the same presents. To the men of the escort he gave Rs.1,200 and the same amount to their servants. "All these things went to the Company, much to our disgust as well as to that of the Maharaja", lamented Osborne.

The annexation of the Panjab must take place immediately after Ranjit Singh's death. To bring about his early death, the meeting between the Governor-General and the Maharaja was proposed at Firozpur at the end of the year 1838.

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The Firozpur Meeting, 26 November-5 December, 1838

Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, left Shimla in early November, 1838. He stayed in Panjab for 36 days. He was accompanied by fifteen thousand men.[1] On his way from Shimla to Ludhiana, at Sanehwal, which belonged to the Maharaja, Auckland was presented Rs. 2,500, Commander-in-Chief Rs. 525, Macnaughten, Wade, Clark each Rs. 500, and all necessary things were provided. On the Governor-General's arrival at Ludhiana, he was presented, on behalf of the Maharaja, Rs. 1,100 and 500 vessels of sweets, and the city was illuminated.

The Maharaja sent from Lahore to Firozpur, one lakh fowls, 8,000 quintals of wheat, gram 24,000 quintals, moth 2,000 quintals, milk 600 quintals, broken *mash* 1,200 quintals, fuelwood 16,000 quintals, wheat flour 800 quintals, 3,000 grinding stones, 3 quintals of fine wine, huge quantities of Bedmusk and rosewater. A large number of cartloads of fireworks were brought by Khuda Bakhsh Kotwal. Of several other things such as fruits, sweets, grass and fodder there was no count.

Ranjit Singh left Lahore on 23 November and reached Firozpur on 26 November. He established his camp at the ferry of Barike village on the western side of river Satluj. On 27 November, he offered a cup of wine to

[1]Osborne, op. cit., p. 214.

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Macnaughten who declined it as he had to see the Governor-General, and would not appear before him in an intoxicated state. The Maharaja's dancing girls–Khairan, Kaulan and Pahro–gave a performance of music and dance.

On 28 November, 1838, four cartloads of fireworks were sent to the Governor-General for display. On 30 November, 1838, the Maharaja introduced his ministers, governors and high officials to the Governor-General. When Missar Rup Lal was introduced, he presented 11 gold ducats to the Governor-General. Faqir Aziz-ud-din said, he was the Nazim of the Jalandhar Doab, and a very capable administrator. Out of good humour the Maharaja remarked that Rup Lal had a platoon of 500 young boys under him, but he found it very difficult to control it. Macnaughten submitted that the said platoon had never been managed by anyone previously nor would it be possible to do so in future.

An extremely beautiful and luxurious bed with bedding, especially prepared was presented to the Governor-General for his personal use. The Governor-General observed that earlier the deep friendship of the Maharaja was a matter for remembrance throughout the day and that gift would make him express his gratitude throughout the night as well. Ranjit Singh presented to Emily Eden, sister of Lord Auckland, a bed with gold legs completely covered with rubies and emeralds.

The Maharaja put a pearl necklace round the neck of Clark, the Political Agent designate at Ludhiana, with his own hands. The Governor-General put Clark's hand into that of the Maharaja. Then Ranjit Singh took the gold flask of scent from Missar Beli Ram, and rubbed scent on Lord Auckland's clothes with his own hands. Ranjit Singh's reception hall was illuminated with 600 double-branched stands and 500 chandeliers. The Maharaja received the Governor-General on the banks of river Satluj. The Governor-General took off his hat as a mark of respect.

Then flasks of wine, gold-bejewelled goblets, snacks, grapes, pomegranates were brought in. The Maharaja held the flask in his right hand and a goblet in his left hand. He offered one cup full of wine to the Governor-General, and another cup to Miss Emily Eden, Auckland's sister. She said that the wine was too strong. Aziz-ud-din remarked it was prepared from grapes, pomegranates and oranges. The Governor-General enquired what orange was. He was told it was a famous fruit, sweet and sour, and good for digestion. Just then the dancing girls Khairan, Kaulan and Bahari came in and sang and danced.

Missar Beli Ram was ordered to bring Koh-e-Noor and other diamonds in a golden tray. They were shown to all Englishmen and ladies.

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The great mosque and the city of Firozpur had splended illuminations.[1]

The Maharaja sent three lakhs of rupees to Thomas to purchase grain for the Army of the Indus.

On 3 December, 1838, the Maharaja woke up at about 3 o'clock in the morning, made a prostration before the *Granth Sahib* and offered an *Ardas*. At 5 A.M., he rode out. When he reached near the camp of the English, the Governor-General came out to receive him along with Commander-in-Chief, Macnaughten and others. The Maharaja and the Governor-General rode on horses for 5 km. The English regiments and platoons were spread over a distance of 9 km. The Maharaja inspected the parade and gave away Rs. 11,000 as a reward.

On 4 December, 1838, in the afternoon, the Maharaja went to the English camp. He was seated in a buggy with Raja Hira Singh. The Governor-General went a distance of 2 km ahead to receive the Maharaja. In the evening Ranjit Singh expressed a desire to see the English magazine. It was a dark night. Macnaughten said it was not the proper time. The Maharaja insisted on seeing it at that very time. He, all alone, was led to a place 6 km away from Governor-General's camp. One regiment and two platoons were keeping watch, while the gunners were standing ready to apply a match in an emergency. He saw a large collection of boxes. Each box contained 18,000 balls per gun. On his return he saw illumination and a performance by his own dancing girls. He gave them Rs. 1,100. Emily Eden presented one bejewelled plume worth Rs. 7,000, and Macnaughten's wife one ring to the Maharaja. The Sarkar touched them with his forehead. Seated in a buggy the Maharaja returned to his camp. He gave Rs. 200 to the buggy driver and Rs. 25 to the torch bearers.

In a private meeting the Governor-General placed three proposals before the Maharaja: (1) The British Government would establish cantonments at Firozpur and Shikarpur. (2) The Sarkar should support Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk in securing his lost throne with British assistance. (3) A British Resident should be allowed to live at Lahore permanently. As Captain Wade lived there for most of the time, his services would be available to him at all hours.

The Maharaja approved the first two conditions. As regards the third term, he replied that Ludhiana was quite convenient to him for consultation.

On 5 December, 1838, the parade of Sarkar's troops was shown in the

[1]Ibid., p. 214.

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maidan near the village of Fatuke. The Governor-General arrived with Emily Eden and Macnaughten's wife. The platoons, regiments and topkhana were spread in rows over a distance of 8 km. The Governor-General gave Rs. 11,000 to soldiers.

The Maharaja was shown the presents from the British Government, consisting of elephants, horses, camels, battery, howitzers, etc. While inspecting them the Maharaja from exhaustion stumbled and fell down. Sir Henry Fane who was accompanying him, also deliberately fell, then rose and raised Ranjit Singh.

On 5 December, 1838, the Sarkar issued the following orders: (1) Rae Gobind Jas was appointed at Ludhiana and Lala Kishan Chand at Ambala as his vakils. (2) General Ormand was allowed to proceed with English troops to Kabul via Lahore, Attock and Peshawar. (3) The Commander-in-Chief would be attended by Sher Singh orderly upto Mithankot, and would provide Rs. 525 and free rations at every stage. (4) The Governor-General would stop at Harike, Khem Karan, Lakhi and Bhural, to reach Amritsar. Lahna Singh Majithia would accompany him to provide hospitality and offer Rs. 700 at every stage. Princes Kharak Singh and Sher Singh, Sardar Ajit Singh and Raja Gulab Singh would follow in Governor-General's camp to Amritsar.

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On 6 December, 1838, Sarkar left for Khem Karan. The Governor-General was to remain one stage behind him. His elephants were to be fed on sugarcane on the way. Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh would receive Governor-General on the way before reaching Amritsar. Prince Kharak Singh would receive him at Amritsar with *sirwarna* of Rs. 1,100. Bhai Gurmukh Singh would make illuminations three times greater than those at Firozpur.

On 8 December, the Maharaja was informed that Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh had been suffering from stomachache. The Maharaja sent Rs. 5,000 and 25 cows to the Kanwar to give them away in charity. Before *Granth Sahib* with folded hands the Maharaja prayed for his long life. Bhais Gobind Ram and Ram Singh and Faqir Aziz-ud-din were sent to attend the Prince. He rubbed his forehead at his Bunga. He made an *Ardas* of Rs. 1100 at Hari Mandar, of Rs. 500 at Akal Bunga and of Rs. 250 each at other Bungas.

The Governor-General at Amritsar, 11-16 December, 1838

On 11 December, 1838, the Governor-General was put up at Amritsar at Kotha Dasahra. He called on Nau Nihal Singh and made a *sirwarna* of Rs. 1,100, and distributed Rs. 5,000 among the poor.

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On 12 December, 1838, the Maharaja received the Governor-General near Katra Khazana Gate, with a salute. He conducted him to the fort of Gobindgarh, where a second salute of welcome was fired. He then showed every part of it "containing his treasure, chests, about twelve million in gold".[1] Illuminations were ordered. The Governor-General was to visit Durbar Sahib on an elephant. The houses obstructing his passage were demolished, and trees in the way were cut down. The Governor-General was offered 2,000 gold ducats, Rs. 2,500 in cash 2,000 vessels containing fruits and sweets, and to Wade Rs. 1,000 and 25 vessels of sweets.

On 13 December, 1838, the Governor-General and the Maharaja rode for the Durbar Sahib. Ranjit Singh offered at Hari Mandar Rs. 700 and at Akal Bunga Rs. 500. The Governor-General offered Rs. 11,250. Emily Eden went inside the temple. They retired to Sarkar's Bunga. Illuminations and fireworks took place. They retired to their camps by 10 P.M.

On 14 December, 1838, Prince Sher Singh brought the Governor-General to see the parade of Sikh troops. The latter's observations were: (1) He had never seen so many troops at one station. (2) He had never seen anywhere in the world cavalry like that of the Sarkar, such fine horses, clothes, trappings, ornaments, gold and silver saddles with harnesses, costly garments, *kimkhab*, gold and silver threaded coverings, and such beautiful and tall statured young men. Emily Eden said she would write to Queen Victoria about the Sarkar, his hospitality, entertainments, regards and respect, jovial gatherings, fireworks, visit to Durbar Sahib, equipment of cavalry and platoons, etc.

On 15 December, 1838, Wade came to the Maharaja. He said the Governor-General had sent him with a special request. The route to Kabul via Shikarpur was very long, difficult and tedious. For 500 km no water was available and there were many obstacles on the way. He desired that the English troops should be allowed to pass through Panjab via Peshawar. The Sarkar said reply wold be given at Lahore.

Every evening the Governor-General was entertained with music, dance, illuminations and fireworks, and at every visit and function he and his companions were given most expensive presents both at Firozpur and Amritsar.

On 16 December the Sarkar went to Durbar Sahib, made an *Ardas* of Rs. 500 and at Bungas of Rs. 125 each. He then left for Lahore.

On the way he stopped at Ram Tirath, went inside the temple and around it, rubbed his forehead before Thakurs and gave to Bawa Mangal

[1]Osborne, op. cit., pp. 217-18.

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Das Rs. 125. He reached Lahore on 19 December, 1838.

Two roads were built for the convenience of the Governor-General, one from Amritsar to Lahore, and the other from Amritsar to Harike via Tarn Taran.

At Lahore, 19-31 December, 1838

On 19 December, 1838, Lord Auckland, Emily Eden and Lady Macnaughten visited Shalamar Bagh. On the 20th afternoon a jovial gathering was held in this garden. Gold and silver chairs, gold candlestands, sweets, fruits, snacks were brought in large quantities. All drank wine. Dancing girls gave performance. Illuminations and fireworks were displayed. On 21 December, the Governor-General and his party were shown all over the city. Later they reached Hazuri Bagh. The Governor-General "admired the garden which was like a piece of paradise". Emily Eden invited Raja Hira Singh for his painting.

The Sarkar sent to the camp of the Governor-General Rs. 5,000, 125 vessels of sweets, baskets containing oranges, grapes, pomegranates, *bihindana*, *ganderis* of sugarcane; for Macnaughten Rs. 1100, Wade Rs. 500, Resident Rs. 250, Hindu Rao Rs. 250 and fruits, Taimur Shah Rs. 3,500, Sultan Muhammad Khan Rs. 1,500, 51 vessels of sweets and fruits and to Pir Muhammad Khan Rs. 100 and 25 vessels of sweets.

On 23 December all the Englishmen visited Taragarh fort situated on the western side of the Ravi and Jahangir's tomb. On 24 December, Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, several sardars with Governor-General went riding on horses. Lord Auckland fell down from his horse. Prince Nau Nihal Singh lifted him, placed him on an elephant and made a *sirwarna* of Rs. 1,100. The Prince gave Rs. 5,000 to British soldiers and gunners. On 29 December, farewell gifts were exchanged on a grand scale.

On 30 December, Faqir Aziz-ud-din and Diwan Dina Nath submitted to the Sarkar, the Governor-General's letter of assurance. Its main points were read out to him:

1. The Lahore territories on the eastern side of the Satluj will be completely under the control of the Maharaja.
2. To the north, south, east and west of the Sikh kingdom the Company had no purpose or interest.
3. The Sarkar and his descendants would exercise control and authority generation after generation.
4. The English would stick to whatever had been agreed upon in connection with Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk.
5. Whosoever would be appointed from London at Ludhiana and

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Firozpur would not lay any claim to the territory or make any interference in the country of the Sarkar.

6. The said persons would not create any provocation on that side of the territory.

The Governor-General requested that the British army while returning from Kabul should be allowed to pass through the Panjab only once. The Maharaja consented. This provision was settled verbally without reducing it to writing.

Regarding the return of the British army from Afghanistan through the Panjab, the Maharaja laid down the following three conditions: (1) The cowslaughter should not be done in Maharaja's territory. (2) This should not be made a precedent for the passage of the British army in future. (3) The usual consideration and respect should be shown to his government by the British army.

Prinsep writes that Ranjit Singh declared at Firozpur in an interview that "all his stores of cattle and grain were at the disposal of the British" for the First Afghan War.

The farewell presents from the Governor-General consisted of the following articles: Lord Auckland's picture set in a star of very handsome diamonds, suspended by a string of large pearls, a pair of gold-mounted pistols, a splendid Damascus sword in a golden scabbard inlaid with precious stones, and two thoroughbred Cape horses with housings and accoutrements of gold richly studded with turquoise and enamel.

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Lieutenant Colonel Wade was given 21 garments, 4 ornaments and 2½ lakhs of rupees. He was provided with 2 elephants and 4 drivers to carry him and his party. The money was loaded on 200 camels. Bhai Mohan Singh and Chuni Lal were ordered to accompany him to Peshawar and render every possible service, and bring a letter of satisfaction. One hundred and twenty boats were given to the English for building a bridge on the Indus, and 66 boats were used for the construction of a bridge at Harike for the Governor-General.

Osborne recorded in his journal:

> No one in the camp is allowed to purchase a single thing, and a list is sent around once a week in which you put down what you require, and it is furnished at Maharaja's expense. It costs him twenty-five thousand rupees a day; and as it will have been more than a month when we recross Sutlege, it will have been an expensive business to him.

Osborne received some magnificent presents. He could keep nothing

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but the decoration of the military order of the "Runjeet Star of the Punjab", of which order he made him a knight. It was a diamond and enamelled star with his picture in the centre. He gave him also a suit of armour, sword, and matchlocks, bow and arrows, all inlaid with gold, but they all went to the Company.

On 31 December, 1838, a salute was fired on the departure of the Governor-General. Prince Sher Singh and Lahna Singh Majithia were ordered to accompany the Governor-General upto the ferry of Harike. They were ordered to bring certificates of satisfaction.

On 2 January, 1839, a letter came from Diwan Sawan Mal that grain worth 5 lakh rupees had been delivered to Thomas.

On 8 January, 1839, Nihal Singh Ahluwalia reported his presentation of money, sweets, fruits, one elephant, two horses, three ornaments to the Governor-General at Harike.

Osborne wrote in his Journal that "all his power–nay his very kingdom itself depends on his being on good terms with us".[1] M'Gregor wrote that "Ranjit Singh's alliance with the British was not of choice but of political necessity."[2]

Comment

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By the two commercial treaties of the Indus in 1832 and 1835, Ranjit Singh was forced to admit that river Indus from its confluence with the Satluj at Mithankot to the Arabian Sea was under the British protection. By the Tripartite Treaty of 1838, he was compelled to acknowledge British supremacy over Sind and Afghanistan, both being within the sphere of British influence.

Ranjit Singh had been an invalid since 1834 when he was struck by a paralytic stroke. In 1838, he was in a weak state of health. Lord Auckland's five week visit to the Panjab proved the last straw on the camel's back. His habit of attending to the minutist details at Firozpur, Amritsar and Lahore, shattered his health completely. When Lord Auckland called on him to bid farewell on 31 December, 1838, the Maharaja was lying in bed unable to speak even a word or to move an inch. When the Governor-General offered him a jewel as a parting gift, "his eye lighted up with all its wonted fire", in acknowledgement. The great Maharaja had entered the last stage of his life's journey. Had there been no visit by Lord Auckland, Ranjit Singh could have lingered on for 2 or 3 years more. Perhaps this visit was deliberately planned to bring an early death of

[1]Osborne, op. cit., p. 149.
[2]*History of the Sikhs*, I, p. 273.

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Maharaja. The British officers at Shimla, Delhi, Ambala, Ludhiana and Firozpur were getting impatient to seize Panjab as early as possible.

The more Ranjit Singh yielded, the greater and sharper became the anxiety of British officers to seize Panjab like a ripe fruit on the tree.

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CHAPTER 19

Relations with Afghanistan and Others

AFGHANISTAN

Shah-Shuja-ul-Mulk had been jostling from door to door,
Between Kabul, Kandhar, Peshawar, Srinagar, Ludhiana and Lahore,
Dost Muhammad was adamant on Peshawar,
He soon found himself out of power.

Three Phases

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Ranjit Singh's relations with Afghanistan went through three phases: (a) With Sadozais or two Durrani kings, Shah Zaman and Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, both uterine brothers from the same mother. (b) With two Bamzai governors, Ata Muhammad Khan and Jahandad Khan, real brothers from the same mother, sons of Wazir Sher Muhammad Khan. (c) With eight Barakzai brothers, sons of Paindah Khan. Wazir Fatah Khan and Azim Khan were real brothers. Jabbar Khan was born to a concubine of Paindah Khan. Yar Muhammad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan, Pir Muhammad Khan and Sayyid Muhammad Khan were all real brothers from a Ghilzai mother. Dost Muhammad Khan was from an Iranian mother.

THE DURRANI KINGS

Shah Zaman

Ranjit Singh faced along with other Sikh sardars four invasions of Shah Zaman, 1793-1800, king of Afghanistan. Shah Zaman could reach Lahore only once and failed to reach Delhi. His Indian campaigns cost him his throne as well as his eyes. Shah Zaman escaped and reached

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Rawalpindi where Ranjit Singh gave him a house to live in. After sometime he was shifted to Lahore for safety. From there he went to Ludhiana where he lived for a long time as a British pensioner.

Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk

Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, younger brother of Shah Zaman, was the king of Afghanistan from 1803 to 1809. He was defeated by his stepbrother Shah Mahmud. He also escaped to the Panjab. Ranjit Singh received him at Khushab on 3 February, 1810, and gave him Rs.1,250 for a *ziafat* or feast. He joined his brother Shah Zaman at Rawalpindi on 12 February, 1810.

Ata Muhammad Khan Bamzai was the son of Wazir Sher Muhammad Khan and grandson of Shah Vali Khan, the famous Wazir of Ahmad Shah Durrani. With his help Shah Shuja captured Peshawar on 20 March, 1810. Wazir Fatah Khan Barakzai drove Shah Shuja out of Peshawar in September, 1810. In November, 1810, he captured Peshawar again. The Wazir ordered Jahandad Khan, Governor of Attock, to expel Shah Shuja from Peshawar. In January, 1811, Jahandad Khan seized Shah Shuja and sent him to his real brother Ata Muhammad Khan at Srinagar. The Governor demanded Koh-e-Noor from Shah Shuja. In order to force him to yield it he imprisoned him in the fort of Koh-e-Maran, a place infested with snakes. Shah Shuja's household consisting of 600 women joined Shah Zaman at Rawalpindi. At Shah Zaman's request both the families were shifted to Lahore for safety in September, 1812.

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Wafa Begam

Wafa Begam was the seniormost wife of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk and head of the household. Ranjit Singh paid her Rs. 4,000 per mensem to meet the expenses of the whole family. In December, 1812, Wazir Fatah Khan decided to oust Ata Muhammad Khan from Kashmir and sought Ranjit Singh's military help. The Maharaja ordered a force of 12,000 chosen troops under his famous General, Diwan Mohkam Chand to accompany the Wazir. Wafa Begam feared that her husband would be murdered if he fell into Wazir's hands. She promised to give away to the Maharaja the Koh-e-Noor diamond on her husband's safe arrival at Lahore. Diwan Mohkam Chand brought Shah Shuja from Srinagar to Lahore in March, 1813.

The Koh-e-Noor obtained, 1st June, 1813

The Maharaja deputed an agent to Wafa Begam demanding the Koh-e-Noor diamond. She said that the diamond had been pawned to a

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moneylender at Kandhar. Shah Shuja also made excuses. The parleys continued for a month without any success. The Maharaja paid Shah Shuja about Rs. 50,000 in instalments for his expenses.

Ranjit Singh disbelieving the statements of Shah Shuja and Wafa Begam, placed guards round the Shah Shuja's residence with strict instructions to search everyone going into and coming out of the mansion. It produced no effect on the royal family. Then supply of foodstuff was stopped for two days. On 1st April, 1813, two letters were intercepted, one addressed to Fatah Khan Wazir and the other to Afghan chiefs suggesting an attack on Lahore. They were suspected to have been written by the Shah. Hence, it was considered necessary to take greater precautions against such intrigues. Two companies of Sikh soldiers were posted at Shah's residence. Shah Shuja demanded two months time to procure the diamond from his banker. The Maharaja relaxed the severity of restrictions.

On 1st June, 1813, Ranjit Singh waited on Shah Shuja with a few attendants. He was received by Shah Shuja with great courtesy and dignity. In return for Koh-e-Noor, Shah Shuja demanded a jagir valued at one lakh of rupees per annum. Ranjit Singh assigned one worth Rs. 50,000 annually. But this grant remained on paper only.

The Maharaja and Shah Shuja sat in complete silence for an hour. Then Ranjit Singh beckoned an attendant to remind Shah Shuja the purpose of his visit. Shah Shuja realized that there was no escape from the impending obligation. He gave no reply but made a signal with his eyes to one of his attendants, who placed a roll of cloth between the two kings. The Maharaja's attendant unfolded the roll. There the diamond lay radiating brilliance. At the sight of the diamond the Maharaja stretched out his hand, seized the diamond and retired. Koh-e-Noor diamond was about 1½ inches long, a little over one inch in width, about half an inch like an egg, and was valued by Osborne in 1838 at 4½ crore rupees. On 8 June, 1813, at Amritsar, Ranjit Singh exchanged turbans with Shah Shuja.

The Treasonable Letters on 23 June, 1813

Pir Bakhsh, incharge of a police station, reported to the Maharaja that Mullah Hasan and Qazi Sher Muhammad Khan, companions of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, had written some letters under their own seals to Fatah Khan Wazir. He had taken the messengers as captives, and he submitted those letters to Ranjit Singh.

It was written in them that Ranjit Singh was all alone in Lahore. He had no troops with him.[1] It would not be difficult for the Wazir to capture

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Lahore and Ranjit Singh. After that he could defeat the Sikh armies. Ranjit Singh called Shahzada Haidar, son of Shah Zaman, Mullah Hasan and Qazi Sher Muhammad and asked them what they had written. They gave no reply. Ranjit Singh sent a messenger to Shah Shuja, saying when sincere friendship existed between the Shah and him, how was it proper for his men to write such letters to his enemy. Shah Shuja replied they had written without his knowledge and that Ranjit Singh could treat them as he liked.

The Maharaja put them in the custody of the battalion of Shadi Khan commandant. One hundred young Sikhs and a battalion under Shaikh Basawan were appointed to guard the city gates and walls. He ordered the gates to be closed four hours before sunset and to open them after the day had advanced six hours. Shaikh Basawan was ordered not to allow any letter written in Persian to leave without its inspection by the Maharaja.

On 30 June, 1813, Qazi Sher Muhammad Khan was fined Rs. 50,000. Under beating he became unconscious. He recovered after two hours and said he had no money. He was sent back to Shah Shuja who was asked to pay Rs. 50,000 as his fine. Shah Shuja replied that the Qazi could be given any punishment.

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The Loot on 10 September, 1813

Ranjit Singh talked to Nihal Singh, Mat Singh Bharania and Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh individually in privacy. He told them that Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk had one saddle beset with jewels worth Rs. 28 lakhs, one big bedstead of turquoise, its four legs were studded with one big diamond. These things should be secured. They dissuaded him on consideration of humanity as he had been deprived recently of Koh-e-Noor. Six months later he entrusted this job to Ram Singh.

On 4 March, 1814, Ram Singh reported that he sent five maid servants[2] into the ladies' rooms. They brought everything they could find in the interior such as jewellery, turquoise, pearls and small boxes, carpets, swords, pistols, ladies precious dresses in two cartloads. The Shah wept and cried and took no food for two days. The only justification for this misdeed is the recollection of horrible atrocities committed earlier by Shah Shuja's grandfather Ahmad Shah Durrani. Ranjit Singh acted according to the following dictum:

[1]The best troops of Ranjit Singh under Diwan Mohkam Chand were at Attock fighting the battle of Haidru with Dost Muhammad Khan.

[2]Griffin in his *Ranjit Singh* on p. 102 says that among these women one of his wives was also there.

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Baba kare, Pota bhare.

Begams' Escape from Lahore, 14 November, 1814

Shah Shuja could no longer depend upon Ranjit Singh for good and respectable treatment. He decided to escape to Ludhiana where Shah Zaman was living as a British pensioner in peace. First the ladies were to be sent. Diwan Amar Nath says a number of public dancing girls from the red light area were invited to attend a function. The Begams disguised themselves in their clothes in November, 1814. They were helped by Balak Ram, a resident of Uttar Pradesh and the agent of Shugan Chand, the great banker of Delhi and treasurer of the British Resident at Delhi. They escaped through the Taksali Gate in the evening and spent the night in the mausoleum of Data Ganjbakhsh where prostitutes often went to pray. Next morning in the dress of Hindu women covering their faces in *chadars* they travelled to Phillaur in covered bullock carts and reached Ludhiana. They were honourably received and were granted an annual allowance of Rs. 18,000 to meet their household expenses. From there Wafa Begam wrote several letters to the Governor-General requesting him to secure her husband from Ranjit Singh. Balak Ram was arrested and all the cash and property of the Shah in his possession was taken.

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Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk's Escape, April, 1815

Shah Shuja took five months to mature his plans for escape from Lahore. Cunningham says he was helped by some Sikhs. Diwan Amar Nath writes that Shah Shuja's great supporter was the celebrated darvesh Kakka Shah of Sialkot. On 13 April, 1815, in the day Shah Shuja's two sons and several other members of his family reached the banks of river Ravi at Shahdara and stayed in the disguise of Muslim faqirs in Jahangir's mausoleum. Shah Shuja was to slip out in the night. All the gates of the city were closed. Watchmen were moving about. Shah Shuja disguised himself as a watchman reached the main drain at Masti Gate, which carried dirty water of the city to the river. He got out through the drain. He was led to the river. A boatman took him across the river. In Jahangir's tomb he disguised as a faqir. Kakka Shah carried him to Sialkot, then to Bhimbar and finally to Kishtwar. There Shah Shuja married the daughter of the Muslim Raja. After sometime he tried to seize Kashmir but failed. From Kishtwar Shah Shuja travelled as an ordinary passenger in heavy rains in August, 1816. He passed through Chamba and Kulu, crossed river Satluj at Seoni in Bhajji state. He arrived at Manimajra near Chandigarh, and joined his family at Ludhiana in September, 1815. The

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British Government raised his allowance from Rs. 18,000 to Rs. 50,000.

Shah Shuja's movements in these five months remained unknown to Ranjit Singh. Later on he fined the Raja of Kulu Rs. 80,000 for not capturing Shah Shuja. He took possession of Shah Shuja's money which had been deposited with various bankers of Lahore. Gulab Rae incharge of Masti Gate was imprisoned on 27 July, 1815, for his negligence in enabling Shah Shuja to escape from the city.

Shah Shuja's Attempts to Recover His Throne

In 1826, he began correspondence with Ranjit Singh to obtain money and men for recovering his throne. In 1827 he applied to the Governor-General for permission to try his luck again, with the help of Ranjit Singh and Mirs of Sind. He was told that in case of failure he might not be given refuge in the British territory.

The Treaty of 1833

In September, 1831, Lord William Bentinck allowed Shah Shuja to open negotiations with the Maharaja which continued for two years and eventually a treaty was proposed on 12 March, 1833. Ranjit Singh offered certain terms. The Shah accepted only the following:

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1. On recovering his throne Shah Shuja would pay to the Maharaja three lakhs of rupees and 102 horses of the finest description, besides some other valuable presents.
2. Whenever the Maharaja required, Shah Shuja would supply him a strong contingent under one of his sons.
3. The booty acquired in the form of money, jewellery and cannon from the Barakzai chiefs would be shared equally between Shah Shuja and the Maharaja.
4. Shah Shuja would disclaim all title and right on the part of himself, his heirs and successors, to whatever territories were in the possession of the Maharaja and his dependents and tributaries on either bank of the Indus.
5. Shah Shuja agreed to the equal division of the territories of the "Sindians and others". This clause was modified on the suggestion of Captain Wade as follows:

> "Regarding Shikarpur, and the territory of Sind lying on the right bank of the Indus", the Shah shall abide by "whatever may be considered as right and proper, in conformity with the happy relations of friendship subsisting between the British Government and the Maharaja, through Captain Wade".

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6. Shah Shuja shall allow no one to cross the Indus without the Maharaja's permission.

7. Each party shall address the other on terms of equality.

8. The killing of kine should be prohibited throughout his dominion and in the Afghan armies.

9. The portals of Somnath temple, made of Sandal wood, carried away by Mahmud of Ghazni more than 800 years ago should be delivered to the Maharaja.

The Treaty of 12 March, 1833, was ratified by Ranjit Singh in August, 1833.

Shah Shuja left Ludhiana in 1833 with 600 men and two guns bought from the Rani of Thanesar. He obtained financial help from the Nawab of Malerkotla, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala and Nawab of Bahawalpur. Ranjit Singh supplied him Rs. 1,25,000 in lieu of Koh-e-Noor, and Rs. 30,000 against Shah Shuja's jewels, and some guns and matchlocks. The Shah then possessed 3,000 fully equipped soldiers and two lakhs of rupees.

The Mirs of Haidarabad attacked Shah Shuja, but they were defeated on 9 January, 1834. Shah Shuja got from the Mirs five lakhs of rupees and some guns. He captured Kandhar, but was defeated by Dost Muhammad Khan on 1st July, 1834. Wandering through Qalat, Rajasthan and Delhi, he returned to Ludhiana in March, 1835. His army disappeared but he brought two lakhs of rupees.

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Tripartite Treaty of 1838

In July, 1838, a Tripartite Treaty was made between Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, Ranjit Singh and the British Government. Shah Shuja was to be placed on the throne at Kabul by the British army. Ranjit Singh was to support Shah Shuja with money and material. The British army marched from Firozpur via Bahawalpur, Shikarpur, Quetta, Kandhar and Ghazni to Kabul. The British placed Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk on the throne at Kabul on 7 August, 1839. He failed to establish himself in power. He was killed at the instance of Akbar Khan on 5 April 1842. His family returned to Ludhiana.[1]

[1]Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk's son Prince Shahpur was given an allowance of Rs. 4,000 per mensem until his death in 1884. Then his younger brother Prince Nadir, as head of the family, got Rs. 3,000 p.m. He became President of Municipal Committee, Ludhiana Honorary Magistrate and Provincial Durbari. In 1877 Shahpur and Nadir were allotted 4,000 acres of land in Montgomery district. Nadir died in 1895. His eldest son Muhammad Hamdam was given an allowance of Rs. 100 p.m.

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The Two Bamzai Brothers

Ata Muhammad Khan was the Governor of Kashmir. Wazir Fatah Khan, supported by Diwan Mohkam Chand at the head of 12,000 Sikh troops, defeated and expelled him from Kashmir in February, 1813. His brother Jahandad Khan was the Governor of Attock. At the suggestion of Ata Muhammad Khan, he surrendered the fort of Attock to Ranjit Singh. Ata Muhammad went back to Afghanistan. Jahandad Khan lived on his jagir granted by Ranjit Singh in the Panjab.

The Barakzai Brothers

1. Fatah Khan Wazir was the eldest brother. Ranjit Singh collaborated with him in the 1812-13 expedition to Kashmir. He turned against Ranjit Singh on his occupation of Attock in March, 1813. He fought the battle of Haidru in June, 1813, with the Sikhs, but was defeated. Afterwards, he tried to flatter and coax Ranjit Singh to get back Attock in vain. He was murdered at Herat in 1818.

2. Fatah Khan's real brother was Muhammad Azim Khan. He was the Governor of Kashmir from 1813 to 1818. He was mainly responsible for the failure of Ranjit Singh's Kashmir expedition in 1814. In 1818 he succeeded his brother as Wazir of Afghanistan. In that capacity he tried to expel the Sikhs from Trans-Indus region. In 1823 he led an expedition against the Maharaja. In the battle of Tihri he suffered a crushing defeat. He could not survive this disgrace and humiliation and passed away within two months.

3. Jabbar Khan was the Governor of Kashmir in 1818-19. Ranjit Singh seized Kashmir from him in 1819. He fled away to Kabul.

4. Yar Muhammad Khan was Governor of Peshawar. He submitted to Ranjit Singh. At that time Sayyid Ahmad Wahabi was carrying on a Jihad against the Sikhs. He felt enraged and attacked Peshawar. Yar Muhammad was killed while fighting.

5. His brother Sultan Muhammad succeeded him. He served as Ranjit Singh's Governor of Peshawar, and later as his jagirdar. *Umdat-ut-Twarikh* is full of references about him.

6. Pir Muhammad and Sayyid Muhammad also served as jagirdars of the Lahore Durbar. For the interest of the reader a couple of references to these brothers are quoted below from Sohan Lal's chronicle:

11 March, 1836: Pir Muhammad bought a horse to be presented to Ranjit Singh, but it was detained by Dost Muhammad Khan at Kabul.

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25 March, 1837: Pir Muhammad Khan and Sultan Muhammad Khan reached Shahdara on the Ravi. The Maharaja sanctioned Rs. 3,000 for their entertainment with 100 trays of sweets.

19 April, 1837: The sons of Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan were granted Rs. 500, valuable *doshalas* and pairs of gold bangles as farewell gifts and were allowed to leave.

21 April, 1837: Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan were granted rich robes of 11 pieces, one elephant with a silver howdah, 2 horses, 2 pieces of jewellery to their sons, and robes of honour for men who accompanied them and ordered them to go to Peshawar with Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh.

7 May, 1837: Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan were ordered to go to Peshawar with Kharak Singh. A sum of Rs. 1,500 was granted for their expenses.

12 June, 1837: Pir Muhammad and Sultan Muhammad demanded the jagir of Doaba near Peshawar for life and a sum of Rs. 1,30,000 to distribute salaries. The Maharaja said Doaba could be given on the security of Avitabile Governor of Peshawar, and money for distribution of salaries could be taken from Lachhman Prashad.

13 April, 1838: Sayyid Muhammad Khan presented one lakh of rupees as *nazar*, five horses and two swords to the Maharaja, who granted him Rs. 500 and several trays of sweets.

16 March, 1839: Sultan Muhammad Khan and Sayyid Muhammad Khan requested for the grant of Peshawar on payment of Rs. 7 lakhs a year together with 20 horses, 25 mules, 25 camels, 100 maunds of Bara rice. A robe of honour of 9 pieces, 3 pieces of jewellery, 1 elephant and Rs. 500 in cash were granted to Sultan Muhammad and *doshalas* to his four sons.

7. Dost Muhammad Khan had been claiming Peshawar since 1826 when he had established his firm hold on Kabul. Ranjit Singh realized that the position of Peshawar under his Governor Sultan Muhammad Khan, a brother of Dost Muhammad Khan, was unstable. Hence, he took advantage of Dost Muhammad's involvement in warfare with Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, and incorporated it in his dominion in May, 1834, and gave its charge to Nau Nihal Singh with Hari Singh Nalwa as his deputy to control military affairs.

On his return from Kandhar, Dost Muhammad declared that "he had got rid of one enemy in the person of Shah Shuja, now defeated, but another was powerfully wounding his heart and honour by the constant turn of affairs, and by the remembrance of the inroads made by an infidel

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into the Mahomedan land".[1]

He sought British help in vain. Having been thrown on his own resources, he declared a holy war against the Sikhs in 1835. He arrived at Peshawar with a large army of his own, and an enormous body of religious fanatics of Peshawar-Hazara region. At the sight of the Maharaja and his army he lost his wits and fled away without fighting.

In March,1837, Ranjit Singh celebrated the marriage of his grandson Nau Nihal Singh. Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief in India, attended it. Ranjit Singh collected his best troops from all places including Hazara and Peshawar to impress him with his might and main. Hari Singh Nalwa was left with a small force of inferior troops. Hari Singh had built a fort at Jamrud at the mouth of the Khaibar Pass. Dost Muhammad sent a strong army supported by Ghazis under his son Muhammad Akbar Khan and Wazir Sami Khan to demolish this fort and capture Peshawar. A battle was fought at Jamrud in April, 1837. Hari Singh Nalwa was killed, but neither Jamrud fort nor Peshawar was taken.

At this time Lord Auckland was the Governor-General of India. He formed a plan to bring Sind under British supremacy and Afghanistan within British sphere of influence. Ranjit Singh wanted to retaliate on Dost Muhammad Khan by conquering the Jalalabad province of Eastern Afghanistan. In order to check the Maharaja and to appoint a British Resident at Kabul, Alexander Burnes was sent to negotiate a treaty. Dost Muhammad demanded possession of Peshawar as the only condition for forming an alliance with the British. Auckland considered Peshawar as if it were under the British. The negotiations fell through. Ranjit Singh was brought into Tripartite Treaty in 1838. Ranjit Singh died in June, 1839. Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk was placed on the throne at Kabul in August, 1839. Dost Muhammad fled into Turkistan.

Comment

A proverb says that in a political contest one should expect either *Takht* or *Takhta*, i.e., crown or coffin. Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk ruled in the beginning and at the end of his life. Between these two points he remained a plaything of the Bamzai brothers, of Ranjit Singh, of the British, and of fate. Ranjit Singh's treatment of the Shah was sometimes good, sometimes bad and sometimes normal. Eventually he supported his restoration to the throne of Kabul by the Tripartite Treaty of 1838, which cost both the monarchs their lives.

As regards Dost Muhammad Khan, he tried every possible means and

[1]Mohan Lal, *Life of Dost Muhammad*, p. 168.

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strained every nerve to keep the invaders' gateway to India open. He failed to achieve this objective. If the English had not been jealous of Ranjit Singh's power, he would have taught a lesson to Dost Muhammad Khan for killing his bravest general Hari Singh Nalwa.

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BAHAWALPUR

From Bahawalpur Maharaja demanded tribute,
It was realized with threats resolute;
Eastern part was under British protection,
Western part paid under coercion.

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The Capital and the State

Bahawalpur was founded by Bahawal Khan in 1748. The town stood on the left bank of the Satluj, 4 km from the river and 105 km south of Multan. It was fortified by a mud wall 7 km in perimeter. The area of the State was 22,000 square miles. It was mostly sandy. One-sixth of the land was cultivated. River Satluj was the only source of irrigation. Its population was nearly 6 lakhs. The annual revenues amounted to 10 lakhs. It was tributary to the Durrani kings of Afghanistan. The Nawab paid 1½ lakhs of rupees as annual tribute.

Bahawalpur state extended upto the Indus below its junction with the Satluj. It was bounded on the north upto the southern limits of Mamdot under Ranjit Singh, in the south upto the borders of Sind, on the east by Bikaner state, and in the west by the borders of Multan province. It lay on both sides of river Satluj. Tigers and wild animals abounded. Bahawalpur became famous for fruits and cotton and silk cloth. The Hindu weavers manufactured lungis, scarfs and turbans and Hindu merchants exported these goods to Central Asia and Caspian Sea region.

In 1835, apples were sold for one rupee and a quarter per quintal, mangoes at Rs. 12.50 a quintal and oranges from Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 a quintal. A wild goose could be had for two paise and a duck for one paisa each. Masson remarked: "In few countries are provisions finer, more abundant and cheaper".

The Nawab's army consisted of about 10,000 men. He had a foundry for cannon, and good carriages for them.

Relations with Ranjit Singh

The Nawabs of Bahawalpur gave some encouragement to Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan in the beginning, but they soon realized that their safety lay in remaining on good terms with the Maharaja.

Ranjit Singh conquered Multan in 1818, and annexed Derajat in 1821. Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan of Bahawalpur was asked to pay tribute. On his refusal he was defeated in an engagement, and forced to pay a large amount. On the Nawab's complete submission the district of Derah Ghazi Khan was farmed out to him for an annual sum of two lakhs of rupees. After a year or so the amount was raised to three lakhs. The Nawab failed in paying it. His country was invaded. The Nawab's officers fled across the Satluj leaving behind movable property of little value. To the east of river Satluj the area was under British protection.

Sadiq Muhammad Khan, the Nawab of Bahawalpur, died in April, 1826. Rahim Yar Khan under the title of Bahawal Khan III succeeded

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him. On his accession he sent rich presents to the Maharaja who conveyed his greetings and congratulations accompanied by jewellery, robes of honour and horse trappings. He renewed his father's engagements with Ranjit Singh for his territory situated to the north and west of river Satluj. The Nawab's vakils resided at Lahore to watch the interests of their state.

Lahore Durbar

In January, 1831, Jamadar Khushhal Singh was ordered to realize tribute from the Nawab. In case of delay troops should be despatched to lay waste his country. The Jamadar in a forceful manner asked the vakils to pay the amounts. They explained "that the respectable Nawab was really a loyal tributary". He had never shown any negligence in the past and would never do so in future. They requested "that the troops be not appointed in that direction."

As no money came, troops were appointed on 24 February, 1831. The vakils became restless. They said the Nawab had written to them that *hundis* worth one lakh had been sent and they would be reaching the Maharaja in a day or two. The Maharaja ordered the troops to return. The *hundis* were received on 26 February, 1831.

On 13 March, 1831 Ventura, who was at Multan, was ordered to ask the Nawab of Bahawalpur to pay the remaining sums of tribute. In case of delay he would occupy the southern and northern territories of Kachhi till further orders from the Maharaja. On 5 April, one *hundi* worth Rs. 50,000 was received by Jamadar Khushhal Singh. The Nawab promised to pay one lakh rupees shortly. He requested that troops should not lay waste his country.

On 8 May, 1831, Chaman Lal, vakil of the Nawab of Bahawalpur, presented to the Maharaja *hundis* worth Rs. 50,000, 3 horses, 3 Persian guns, one sword, 132 rolls of *khes* and red silk, and 5 hunting dogs. He was granted Rs. 500.

On 20 July, 1831, the Maharaja told Wade that a dispute had arisen between the Nawab of Bahawalpur and General Ventura regarding the fixation of the amount of tribute. The Nawab refused to discuss this matter with Ventura and said he would directly deal with the Maharaja. Ventura wrote to the Maharaja "that in case Bahawalpur had been on this side of the river Satluj he would have certainly rendered meritorious services, but as a great wall was situated between them he wanted to know what should be his plans".

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Derah Ghazi Khan

In 1831 Derah Ghazi Khan was taken away from the Nawab of Bahawalpur and was brought under the direct control of the Maharaja. Ventura was entrusted with its administration.

Octroi Duty

In February, 1833, the Maharaja exempted traders of Bahawalpur from payment of octroi duty and desired that the Nawab should also do so. In reply the Nawab said that at first a treaty must be written out to guarantee peace and non-interference between the Sarkar Khalsaji and Nawab Sahib.

Chandra Bhan

On 20 December, 1836, Chandra Bhan, vakil of the Nawab of Bahawalpur, presented to the Maharaja 17 *khes* covered all over with gold embroidery, rolls of red silk and 3 dogs. The Maharaja enquired about the boundary between the Nawab of Bahawalpur and Diwan Sawan Mal, and granted him Rs. 100 for entertainment.

Comment

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Bahawalpur was a tributary of Kandhar and Kabul. After Ranjit Singh's conquest of Multan in 1818, he considered himself successor of the Durrani kings in their Indian possessions and demanded tribute from the Nawab of Bahawalpur. The conduct of the Nawab in his dealing with Lahore was on the whole satisfactory. Ranjit Singh did not conquer Bahawalpur on account of its poor economic resources, and submissive attitude of its Nawabs.

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SIND

Sind was Ranjit's dreamland,
He feared the British but loved its sand;
The English played a clever role,
Deprived the Maharaja of his goal.

The Mirs and Their Resources

Sind was divided into three independent states under Talpur Mirs. The greatest was Haidarabad ruled over by Mir Murad Ali. To the north of Haidarabad on both sides of the Indus was the state of Khairpur under Mir Rustam Khan, the eldest son of Mir Sohrab Khan recently deceased. The third state was Mirpur, lying towards Kachh, governed by Mir Ali Murad Khan.

Pottinger put their total income in the year at 60 lakhs. Burnes put it at 30 lakhs as follows:

Haidarabad	15 lakhs
Khairpur	10 lakhs
Mirpur	5 lakhs

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Pottinger estimated the military strength of the three branches at 40,000.

Haidarabad	20,000
Khairpur	12,000
Mirpur	8,000

It consisted mainly of cavalry which was ill-trained and ill-equipped and stood no chance of success against a small force of well trained and disciplined troops.

Ochterlony

In 1812 Ochterlony, British Political Agent at Ludhiana, visited Lahore to attend the marriage of Prince Kharak Singh. The Maharaja enquired of him whether the English were interested in Sind. The General, like military men, frankly replied in an emphatic 'No'.

Vakils

On 30 June, 1813, the Maharaja talked to the vakil of Haidarabad in privacy for four hours. Ranjit Singh told him that after establishing full

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control over Attock and Kashmir, arrangements would be made for the administration of the border districts of Sind.

Mir's Attitude

After conquering Multan in 1818, Ranjit Singh became anxious to seize Sind which was definitely weaker than Multan. The Mirs of Sind also realized this factor, and they decided to win the goodwill of the Sikh Lion of Lahore. Their agents waited upon the Maharaja at Lahore. He demanded tribute from them. They brought presents, but resisted the demand for a regular tribute.

Bhakkar and Sukkur

Towards the close of 1819 Ranjit Singh led an expedition against Bahawalpur. He captured Derah Ghazi Khan and entrusted its administration to the Nawab of Bahawalpur, for a certain amount of tribute. He then advanced to Bhakkar and Sukkur, belonging to Mirs of Sind on the Indus and realized some tribute. Ranjit Singh returned to Lahore in April, 1820.

Tribute demanded

In November, 1823, the Maharaja subdued the Bugti tribe on the borders of Sind and exacted tribute from them. He demanded tribute from the Mir of Khairpur.

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In November, 1825, Ranjit Singh sent an agent to Sind to demand tribute. He returned with the vakils of the Mirs. They resided for sometime at Lahore.

In 1826 Ranjit Singh told the Sind envoys that their masters had stopped paying tribute to Kabul. In India he had occupied a major part of Kabul territories. Hence, he had become the rightful authority to receive tribute from Sind. The envoys did not accept this view.

An Impediment

From 1827 to 1831, Sayyid Ahmad kept Ranjit Singh fully occupied, and thereby checked him from expanding his territory. Had there been no Sayyid Ahmad on the North-West Frontier, Ranjit Singh might have conquered Sind. Thus the Sayyid did a good turn to the British Government indirectly. The Muslim population of Delhi, supported by the Mughal emperor, offered every help, unchecked by the British authorities, to the Sayyid in his Jihad against the Sikhs. Many resigned the Company's service and proceeded to join the Sayyid. As soon as Ranjit Singh was

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free from Sayyid's Jihad in 1831, he planned to conquer Sind.

Ranjit Singh told Jacquemont, the French traveller, in March 1831, that he was anxious to conquer Sind. The British Government admitted that Ranjit Singh wielded great influence in Sind. For example a letter was received by the Maharaja from the Governor-General on 18 March, 1831. He wrote that Burnes had been sent by river Indus to convey presents to him. The rulers of Sind were creating trouble. The Maharaja was requested to get him out of Sind "in perfect safety and strict security".[1]

The British Anticipation

In March, 1831, the Maharaja enquired of Wade whether the British Government still had the same views about Sind. He gave no reply. In order to keep Ranjit Singh's mind away from Sind the Rupar meeting was planned. Thus Ranjit Singh remained busy for a few months. At Rupar Ranjit Singh made a direct enquiry about British views on Sind from Prinsep, Chief Secretary and other important members of the foreign office, but all kept silent. At that time, Pottinger was negotiating commercial treaty with the Mirs of Sind.

Cunningham is of the view that the British Government should have plainly told Ranjit Singh that they were already on the way to form commercial treaties with the Mirs. After the formation of commercial treaties the Mirs practically passed under British protection. Ranjit Singh also became a part of the opening up trade by the Indus river.

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Burnes and Pottinger

Ranjit Singh was fully conscious of the fact that Alexander Burnes brought presents to him by the Indus to study the political condition of Sind and the Mirs. In fact, Burne's voyage and Pottinger's visits to the Mirs had resulted in complete survey of Sind politically and militarily.

Ventura

In 1832 Ventura with 6,000 men and Gardner with 800 regular infantry and 400 Ghorcharhas or irregular cavalry annexed Sabzalkot on the right bank of the Indus below Mithankot.

Wade

To check further expansion of Sikh power in Sind, on 9 December,

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 17.

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1832, Captain Wade told the Maharaja that the real object of the British Government in the navigation of the Indus was to establish their sway in the country of Sind and to control Afghanistan.[1]

Presents

The vakils of the Mirs of Sind attended Ranjit Singh's court and offered presents on behalf of their masters, but paid no regular tribute. For example in June, 1833, they presented 10 horses, 4 dogs, some swords and garments and one gun.

Gujar Singh Majithia

In September, 1834, the Maharaja proposed to send Gujar Singh Majithia and Rae Gobind Jas to Calcutta with presents for the King of England, with the real motive to ascertain the views of the Governor-General and the Foreign Office about his designs on Sind. At Calcutta Gujar Singh developed connection with a *Farangan* (Eurasian woman) and decided not to return to the Panjab. The Maharaja came to know of it on 21 June, 1835, and felt very sorry. He remarked that Faqir Aziz-ud-din had gone to Dost Muhammad Khan as a vakil and came back after putting him to flight, while Gujar Singh had done such an improper act, what could be expected from such unreliable persons?[2]

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Restraint

After Dasanra in 1835, Ranjit Singh turned his attention towards Sind. He demanded from the three Mirs ten lakhs of rupees as a tribute. His troops captured Rojhan which belonged to the Mir of Khairpur. This place lay on the borders of Sind and was the chief town of the Mazari tribe of Baluchis. Jannat, the mother-in-law of Bahram Khan, the Mazari chief, was captured as a hostage. She was set free in December, 1835 on receiving 25 camels as ransom. Their territory was situated between Mithankot and Shikarpur on the right bank of the Indus. It extended the Maharaja's sway up to Shikarpur. To check his ambition the British Government took the Mirs under their protection. Ranjit Singh was informed "in explicit terms, its sentiments respecting his aggressive policy".

In October, 1836, Lord Auckland wrote to the Home Government in London that Sind must be protected "against the only enemy that it has to fear".

[1]Ibid., p. 157.
[2]Ibid., p. 239.

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Ranjit Singh's interest in Sind continued unabated, but he felt helpless before the British diplomacy. According to Alexander Burnes, a discontented prince of the Haidarabad family, Nur Muhammad, was given shelter by Ranjit Singh at Rajanpur in his territory on the northern border of Sind with a suitable pension.

Shikarpur

Shikarpur was the most important place in Sind. It was a great centre of trade and banking. Ranjit Singh had extended his territory up to Shikarpur. The city was inhabited mostly by Hindus who were followers of Guru Nanak called Sahajdhari Sikhs. Pottinger put its land revenue at two and a half lakhs and income from customs at Rs. 64,000. Ranjit Singh was forced to give up his claim to Shikarpur by the Tripartite Treaty of 1838.

Comment

Sind was militarily the weakest Durrani province in India. Metcalfe had hinted to Ranjit Singh that by signing the Treaty of Amritsar he would be free to extend his kingdom on the west of River Satluj. The most suitable time for the conquest of Sind was after the capture of Attock in 1813. Ranjit Singh's prestige had risen very high. His most trusted and successful general, Diwan Mohkam Chand, should have been interested with the operations in Sind. Hari Singh Nalwa should have been attached to him as his deputy. Faqir Azizud-din should have assigned diplomatic duties under the Diwan. The Diwan's son, Moti Ram should have been transferred from Jalandhar to organise civil government of the conquered territory in Sind. Ranjit Singh himself should have taken up his position at Bahawalpur to arrange supplies to the Diwan by the river Indus. Atar Singh Sood Sandhanwalia was to guard Attock against Wazir Fatah Khan of Kabul. Lahore should have been placed under the control of a council consisting of Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Nihal Singh Atariwala and Faqir Nur-ud-din. The British at home were busy in the final phase of the Peninsular War against Napoleon. In India they were involved in the Gorkha War, 1814-16, and in the Third Maratha War and Pindari War, 1816-18. Ranjit Singh missed this chance.

Waqt ki chuki dumni, gae al patal.
(Time once lost never returns. An opportunity once lost seldom returns.)

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The conquest of Sind would have given him access to the sea. In addition to increasing his trade and commerce by the Indus and the sea, it would have given his kingdom an international status. In that event the danger to his State from the British would not have been so great. But Ranjit Singh was neither a diplomat nor a statesman. He was only a mighty warrior against the declining Durrani empire.

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NEPAL

Nepal and Panjab for each other had great admiration,
The British territory in the way caused much frustration;
The Maharaja recruited Gorkha regiments,
Fondly imported Napalese elephants.

Ranjit Singh had personally come into contact with the Gorkhas of Nepal at Kangra in 1809. He had great admiration for Gorkhas as soldiers. He also noticed the tough opposition offered by them to the British forces in the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16. He decided to recruit as many Gorkhas as possible in his infantry regiments. He was also interested in the elephants of Nepal.

The Nepal Durbar was anxious to establish diplomatic relations with Lahore. As the British Government did not allow any collaboration

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between two independent Indian states, the exchange of communication often took place secretly.

Ranjit Singh received overtures as early as 1814, but the Maharaja did not encourage such advances for fear of the British Government. On 4 November, 1814, a letter containing cordial sentiments was addressed by the Maharaja to the Raja of Nepal. He entrusted it to his representative to be sent to the Raja of Nepal.

In 1815, the Nepal Government sought Ranjit Singh's help in the Gorkha War against the British and requested to allow his bankers to lend Nepal five lakhs of rupees. Ranjit Singh refused to entertain these proposals. Later on when the Gorkhas were defeated he felt sorry for them. The British authorities looked upon him with great suspicion and kept a vigilant eye on his movements.

Gorkha's Regiments

Ranjit Singh was keen to have a Gorkha regiment in his army. On 17 August, 1815, he recruited 10 Gorkha soldiers. He sent an agent, Abid Khan, to cross river Satluj and persuade Gorkhas fighting against the British to join him on the temptation of better terms of service.

After sometime another attempt was made to entice Gorkha soldiers from the British army. Two men took part in it. One was Shiv Dat Rae, vakil and confidant of the Raja of Bilaspur, who wished to win the good-will of Ranjit Singh. The other was Sangat Singh, a Gorkha in the service of the Maharaja. Sangat Singh secured a *parwana*, or an official note from Sri Singh Sahib dated at Amritsar, 13 Magh or 22 February, 1815 unsigned and unsealed, but supposed to be from Ranjit Singh. Sangat Singh's letter was addressed to Subedar Jehar Singh. Shiv Dat wrote to Jamadar Daljit Mulloo. Ranjit Singh's *parwana* was addressed to Khushhal Singh Purabia. These three papers were left in the Ist Nusseeree Battalion at Sabathu on 3 March, 1816, by a Brahman priest who immediately disappeared. These three papers invited Gorkhas to join Lahore Durbar promising rank depending on the number of deserters. Shiv Dat Rae made another attempt on 5 April, 1816. He sent a messenger from Bilaspur to Kotgarh inviting Gorkhas to join Ranjit Singh's service.

Search for Allies

After the Gorkha War of 1814-16, the Nepal Durbar was anxious to find allies against the British Government. They thought that Maharaja Ranjit Singh could be the best ally. They began sending presents and deputations occasionally because the Maharaja hesitated to receive them.

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In mid thirties these contacts became frequent.

In 1834, the court of Nepal sent Captain Karbir Singh Khatri to Lahore. Maharaja Ranjit Singh consulted Captain Wade whether he should receive the Nepal agent. On Wade's advice he was asked to leave Lahore without a meeting with the Maharaja.

Kaji Kulu Singh

The Nepal Durbar made another attempt to establish dilomatic relations with the Lahore Durbar in 1835 and sent Kaji Kulu Singh with Karbir Singh. The Maharaja did not reciprocate it and ordered them to leave Panjab immediately. The Kathmandu Durbar was disappointed and kept silent for a while.

Devi Singh and Others

Devi Singh a broker in horses and elephants and a reliable person of the Raja of Nepal, was granted in August, 1835, 7 garments and a large sum for himself and one special horse and some fine garments with a letter for Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja informed Wade about Devi Singh's visit and asked him whether he should accept or return Nepalese articles. Wade gave a vague reply saying the Maharaja was a unique personality.

In February, 1836, some reliable persons of the Raja of Nepal came to purchase pashmina at Amritsar. They were presented to the Maharaja by Dhian Singh. The leader was granted a *doshala*, two others were given pashmina *chadars* and the rest of them one *dopatta* each. They were exempted from octroi charges.

Eko Shah Pandit of Banaras

In June, 1836, Eko Shah, the vakil of the Raja of Nepal, offered 2 elephants with seats and brocade trappings, one horse, one necklace, some musk, some rolls of Chinese and Indo-Chinese cloth. He brought no letter for fear of interception by the British Government. He was granted Rs. 250 for entertainment, Rs. 200 as reward and two elephants and one horse. A few days later he was given a farewell gift of 9 garments, Rs. 500 in cash, a pair of gold bangles for himself and 11 garments like fine *doshala*, etc. and two horses for the Raja.

In May, 1837, a Nepalese mission consisting of Kalo Singh and Captain Karbir Singh arrived at Ludhiana on its way to Lahore. They told Wade that they had brought a sacred bell to be presented to the temple of Jawalamukhi by personally securing the Maharaja's permission. Captain Wade permitted them to go to Lahore, on the condition that an

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employee of the Ludhiana Agency would keep them company all the time to report on their activities. The members of the mission of May, 1837, eulogised the Maharaja as an Avtar of Hindu religion and a shining lamp of Hinduism. Ranjit Singh replied that both the Governments had common interests and there should be a frequent exchange of presents and other civilities. This reception of the Napalese mission was in sharp contrast to his earlier policy.

Wade expressed to his government his fear that Nepal's example might be followed by other Indian states to establish friendly relations with Lahore, leading to the balance of power against the British Government.

On 5 June, 1837, the news from Amritsar stated that some reliable persons of the Raja of Nepal had arrived there with some presents. The Maharaja said he would receive them on his arrival at Lahore. He sent an order to Khalifa Nur-ud-din to look-after them properly.

On 2 July, 1837, Kaji Kanu and a captain of the Raja of Nepal presented one elephant, 2 Gont horses, one necklace, some musk, one roll of brocade, 5 fur cloaks, some rolls of lungis, 2 Persian guns, 2 swords, 5 rolls of turbans, and 25 rolls of long cloth. The Maharaja granted them Rs. 900, sweets and fruits.

On 24 July, 1837, the vakils of the Raja of Nepal were shown drill of platoons of Ventura. On 7 August, 1837 the vakil of the Raja of Nepal went to see Raja Kalan according to the order of the Maharaja and offered him as *nazar* one elephant, some boxes containing musk, 11 fine garments of China and Indo-China and Rs. 225 as *sirwarna*. The Raja Kalan made a *sirwarna* of Rs. 250, gave them a horse and talked to strengthen unity. On 11 September, 1837, the vakil was shown the fort of Gobindgarh. They were given farewell gifts on 1st October, 1837. The vakil attended Dasahra durbar at Amritsar on 11 October, 1837.

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Matabar Singh

Matabar Singh was a nephew of Nepal's prime minister Bhim Sen who had been dismissed from office in 1837. He wanted to visit Lahore. He was allowed by the Raja to leave on payment of a sum of seven lakhs of rupees. He was detained at Ludhiana. The Maharaja enquired about Matabar Singh from Kaji Amar Singh then present in his court. He replied that Matabar Singh was a notable commander, and his salary was one lakh of rupees per annum. The Maharaja wrote to Wade to issue him a passport. Wade referred the matter to the Governor-General at Shimla. Lord Auckland refused permission and on 20 September, 1838, enquired from Wade: "What expedition was being planned by the Sarkar for which

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his services were required"?[1]

The Raja of Nepal wrote to the Governor-General "Matabar Singh has left according to our wish for a pilgrimage to Sri Jawalaji and the Durbar Sahib at Amritsar and to attend upon the Maharaja to strengthen the relations of friendship and unity between the three Governments. He may be granted a passport in writing so that he might secure a happy interview with the Khalsaji, and might return afterwards unmolested."

The Governor-General replied that "Matabar Singh had come secretly and it was contrary to the best practices of the glorious Sahibs. Therefore, no such passport to cross the river could be granted"

Ranjit Singh wrote to his envoy Rae Gobind Jus at Ludhiana to secure Wade's permission for Matabar Singh. If he refused to see him, even then he should send Matabar Singh to him.[2]

The Maharaja wrote: "He had heard only of his bravery and courage. He simply wanted to see how he fought and carried on battle. He would engage him in his service only according to the desire of the great government." He also assured Wade that he had no intention to establish direct relations with Nepal. Thereupon Wade told Matabar Singh, if he wanted to cross river Satluj, he must take a *chaprasi* of the Englishmen with him to watch his activities. Matabar Singh presented himself before the Maharaja on 18 April, 1838. In March, 1839, on account of British opposition, Matabar Singh was ordered to leave Lahore. He left for Jawalamukhi. On the way he was greatly harassed by Wade's agents.

Bhopal Singh

Bhopal Singh Thapa and Arjan Singh Thapa were the sons of General Amar Singh Thapa. Bhopal Singh held an office in Ventura's Special Brigade. Arjan Singh obtained service in another regiment. The Maharaja recruited Gorkhas in his army through them. On account of their high status in Nepal, they were the means to bring about friendly relations between the two governments. Bhopal Singh went to Nepal in 1838, but he maintained his communications with Lahore through his brother.

Comment

Lahore and Kathmandu were equally keen to establish friendly relations with each other. But a long stretch of British territory intervened between them. The British Government strictly prohibited any direct communication between two independent states in India. Hence,

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 527.
[2]Ibid., p. 487.

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Ranjit Singh had to submit to the Political Agent at Ludhiana. The Maharaja had two or three Gorkha regiments in his army, which had been recruited before the British had embarked upon a programme of commercial and colonial domination of the world. Ranjit Singh's role was like that of the Maharaja of Patiala.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Ranjit Singh maintained some secret correspondence with Bharatpur, Marwar, Holkar and Peshwa, but formed no alliance and gave no help. In 1820, he declined to give any support to the Bhonsle Raja of Nagpur. In 1822, he rejected the appeal of Peshwa Baji Rai II. In 1825, Bharatpur in vain tried to seek his help. At one time its Raja thought of forming a matrimonial alliance by offering his daughter to a son of Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh's fame spread as far as Burma. In 1814, a confidential agent of the King of Ava in Burma tried to reach Lahore in the disguise of a merchant. He was intercepted by the Magistrate of Chittagong. He reported the matter to Foreign Office, and the man never reached Lahore. In 1818, some Burmese agents wished to travel across India upto Lahore in search of Buddhist literature. The British Government refused permission. In 1823, a couple of Sikh merchants, believed to have been sent by Ranjit Singh, reached Amarapura, Capital of Burma, to form some sort of alliance with Lahore. In 1838, the Maharaja told Osborne: "I have heard that Burmese fought well and beat your sepoys".

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On 17 March, 1840, Wade in a letter to T.H. Maaddock, Secretary to the Governor-General observed: "During his own life Ranjit Singh strictly fulfilled his pledges notwithstanding that many were the attempts made to divert him from his purpose".

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PART THREE

Secularism at Work

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CHAPTER 20

Civil Administration

Meaning of Secularism

The expression secularism has its origin in the conflict betwen the church and the state in medieval Europe. The secular state guarantees every individual corporate freedom of religion and treats every man and woman as a citizen irrespective of his religion, language or caste. It is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion. These principles were applied by Ranjit Singh as head of the state as well as head of the government, for the first time in Indian history.

A. EVOLUTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS

Lakhpat Rae

Ranjit Singh had been the head of the Sukarchakia Misl from 1790 to 1799. Like other misldars he issued verbal orders of which no written record was kept. Under his direction the administrative affairs of the misl were managed by Diwan Lakhpat Rae. He controlled both civil and military matters. He collected revenue, looked after expenditure, and kept an account of both. He employed under him some clerks called *munshi* or writer and *munim* or accountant. There was a *Toshakhania* who held charge of treasury and other valuable articles acquired mainly as booty.

Basti Ram

After the occupation of Lahore in 1799, a kingdom was in the making. Money in the form of coins, bullion, jewellery and other valuable articles was pouring into Ranjit Singh's possession. Missar Basti Ram Brahman,

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a holy man and charitable physician of Lahore, as an auspicious beginning, was given charge of *Toshakhana*.

Rama Nand Sahu

At the conquest of Amritsar in 1802, Ranjit Singh entrusted all accounts of revenue receipts and expenditure to Rama Nand Sahu, a rich banker of Amritsar. He became the head cashier, while Basti Ram was responsible for day to day expenditure and local income at Lahore. Later on Rama Nand's *Toshakhana* was called *Toshakhana Khas*, and the Lahore treasury as *Toshakhana Bahla*.

In 1805 Jaswant Rao Holkar asked Ranjit Singh to give him cash for his 50 kg golden elephant. Ranjit Singh replied it could be purchased by any number of Banias in his kingdom and referred him to Rama Nand Sahu. Rama Nand asked Holkar's men in which coin they wanted payment, Company's rupees, Muhammad Shahi or Nanak Shahi or Ahmad Shahi Kabul money? Thereupon Holkar suggested to Ranjit Singh to organize a regular office for the preservation of complete records of income and expenditure.

Bhawani Das

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In 1808, Ranjit Singh employed Bhawani Das of Peshawar, son of Thakur Das, Diwan of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Bhawani Das had served for several years as the Diwan of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk. His father and grandfather had held the same office earlier. At Kabul Bhawani Das used Persian, Arabic and Turkish terms for various departments. He applied the same terminology at Lahore. The accounts of income and expenditure submitted by Kardars or district collectors were scrutinized and preserved. There were no provinces at that time. The whole territory was controlled by Ranjit Singh as a single unit. The Maharaja's retentive memory, razor sharp intelligence, personal examination of daily accounts and strict, severe and swfit punishments to wrongdoers served as a great check on corruption.

Professor Sita Ram Kohli was the first research schoiar to study the organization of the administrative system of Ranjit Singh. In his *Catalogue of the Khalsa Darbar Records*, he says that Bhawani Das first of all introduced five departments. Later on their number increased to twelve.

Devi Das

Another officer closely connected with accounts was Devi Das. Diwan Amar Nath says that Devi Das joined in 1808. Griffin writes that he took

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up the Maharaja's service towards the close of 1809. Fauja Singh is of the view that Devi Das was employed in 1803 or even earlier. We accept Amar Nath's statement as he was in the Maharaja's service. The department under his charge was called *Daftar-e-Devi Das*.

Ganga Ram

Ganga Ram, a Kashmiri Pandit, was in the service of Sindhias of Gwalior. He joined the Maharaja's service in 1817. He simplified Bhawani Das's system. In place of Turkish names he used Indian terms such as *Fasal-e-Rabi*, *Fasal-e-Kharif* and *Jama-Kharch*. He organised the *Abkari* or Excise department. He introduced some changes in the departmental organization. He was appointed as head of the office of military accounts. He died in 1826.

Dina Nath

Dina Nath had been working in the revenue department since 1811. On the death of his maternal grandfather, Ganga Ram, in 1826, he was given charge of the royal seal, and on the death of Diwan Bhawani Das in 1834, he was made Finance Minister. During his time the Finance Department was divided into the following branches:

1. *Daftar-e-Abwab-ul-Mal or Daftar-e-Maliyat*: This was the first department organized by Bhawani Das in 1808. It was divided into two sections. *Jama-Kharch Taluqat* dealt with income from land revenue only. *Jama-Kharch Sairat* kept account of income from other sources such as customs (*sairat*), transit duties (*chaukiyat*), excise (*abkari*), tributes (*nazarana*), presents (*tohaif*), escheate or forfeiture (*zabti*), and registration fees (*wajuhat-e-nuqarrari*). It may be called Revenue and Exchequer Department.

2. *Daftar-e-Arbab-ul-Tahwilat*: It was the second department organized by Diwan Bhawani Das. It dealt with *jama* and *kharch* or credits and debits concerning the following four departments: (a) *Bayutat*, (b) *Tahwildar*, (c) *Ahalkar*, and (d) *Zakhirajat*.

The *Bayutat* referred to Imperial household accounts. The *Tahwildar* was a Cash-keeper. *Ahalkar* was an officer of a Court. He dealt with accounts of government funds. It included accounts of central treasury, departments of army, purchases of buildings, etc.

The *Zakhirajat* comprised accounts of stores and provisions for military purchases stored in various forts in the kingdom. This department maintained accounts of *Toshakhana Bahla* or king's privy purses accounts of cloth merchants and jewellers, etc.

3. *Taujihat*: It was sub-divided into two main and several subordinate

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heads. The two main heads were–*Daftar-e-Akhrajat* and *Daftar-e-Mawajib*.

Daftar-e-Akhrajat fell into the following parts: (i) *inam* or rewards and gifts, (ii) *ibtia* or purchases, (iii) *istabal* (stable), (iv) *istimal* or material consumed in building or manufacture, (v) *tamir* (buildings etc.), (vi) *tohaif* (presents), (vii) *khilats* or robes of honour, (viii) *khurish fil* (feed of elephants), (ix) *dharmarth* (charity), (x) *ziyafat* (entertainment), (xi) *langar khas* (royal kitchen), (xii) *tama sher* (feed of lions), (xiii) *maqula sagan* (feed of hounds), (xiv) *jagirat* (grants of land), (xv) *musaidat* (advances of money), and (xvi) *kiraya* (fare of hired camels and carts, etc.)

4. *Daftar-e-Mawajit:* It maintained entries of the pay of the army, civil establishment attached to the court and other menial appointments. It was also divided into several sub-heads: (i) *Mawajib fauj sowari* (irregular cavalry), (ii) *Mawajib piyada mutayyana qilajat* (Infantry garrisoning forts), (iii) *Mawajib sair jamaat* (miscellaneous companies and guards quartered at government buildings, ferries, etc.), and (iv) *Mawajib amla* or establishment.

5. *Roznamcha*: This office kept accounts of daily income and expenditure of the whole durbar.

6. *Daftar or Sarishta-e-Hazur*: It may be called Imperial or Maharaja's own department. It was created in 1803. It attended to the Maharaja's correspondence with heads of other States and foreign high dignitaries. This office kept Maharaja's privy and personal seal to be affixed on important documents. The same seal was to be put on all orders verbally given by Maharaja. Without this seal no order was executed. The Diwan's office charged a certain sum for putting this seal on every paper. The keeper of the seal paid a fixed amount into the imperial treasury annually. For example–on 15 November, 1814, Ranjit Singh gave a contract of the royal seal to Devi Das for Rs. 1,75,000 a year.

7. *Daftar-e-Toshakhania or the Regalia and Treasury*: This department kept in safe custody original treaties with foreign powers, rare jewellery, diamonds, pearls and other extremely valuable articles. The treasury contained cash and bullion received as revenues from provinces and jagirdars. There were three keys to the Treasury. One key was with Missar Beli Ram Toshakhhnia, second with Faqir Nur-ud-din in-charge of Lahore fort, and the third with Sardar Hukma Singh Thanadar of Lahore. The three keys applied together could open the gate of the Treasury.

8. *Awarcha*: The *Awarcha* office maintained an abstract account of receipts and disbursements. It was divided into three parts–*Minfarda* or credit, *Minzalik* (debit) and *Baqi* (balances).

9. *Daftar-e-Naqal*: The *Naqal Daftar* was the copying office. The

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Maharaja's orders finally approved by him or judgements in judicial cases were sent to this office. This department kept the Maharaja's personal seal to be affixed on important documents. The same seal was to be put on all orders verbally given by the Maharaja. Without this seal no order was executed.

As the heads of these departments held charge for a long time or even for life, their *daftars* came to be known after their names, such as *Sarishta-e-Bhawani Das, Daftar-e-Devi Das, Daftar-e-Ganga Ram, Daftar-e-Shahzada.* Every head of the department took orders from the Maharaja directly and not through the Prime Minister.

Other Daftars

Besides the above, there were other *daftars.*

1. *The Office of the Wazir or Prime Minister:* Dhian Singh was given this office. To distinguish him from three other Rajas, he was called Raja Kalan or the seniormost Raja. He was Maharaja's chief adviser in all matters. All important papers, documents, petitions and representations were first scrutinized by him and he jotted down his opinion. Then they were placed before the Maharaja for final orders. The Maharaja's orders were executed by him. The Maharaja issued orders in many cases without consulting the Prime Minister. Dhian Singh's advice was never sought concerning British Government and foreign visitors and employees.

2. *Darogha-e-Deorhi Mualla or Lord Chamberlain*: This office was of great importance as nobody could see the Maharaja except through him. The first person to hold this office was Khushhal Singh and the second was Dhian Singh.

3. *Dabir-ul-Mamlikat or Foreign Office*: It dealt with foreign relations with Afghanistan, Cis-Satluj States whose representatives lived at Lahore, East India Company, Nepal and Sind. Faqir Aziz-ud-din headed this department. He prepared the drafts which were modified according to the instructions of the Maharaja. Faqir Aziz-ud-din was a notable physician, successful negotiator, skilful diplomat, master of highly polished Persian, popular with all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christian, Panjabis, Indians and foreigners.

4. *Auditor General of Accounts*: Ganga Ram and Dina Nath held this office.

5. *Religious Endowments*: Bhais Gobind Ram, Ram Singh and Gurmukh Singh were in-charge of it.

The settlement of revenues, both income and expenditure in the civil and military departments and the audit of accounts was done personally

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by Ranjit Singh. Sometimes, in cases of serious illness this duty was assigned to Raja Dhian Singh.

The Procedure of Work at the Central Secretariat

The Maharaja gave orders in Panjabi. They were immediately noted by a Munshi in Persian. In the office the order was written in the proper form, and the departmental seal was affixed to it. Then the document was read out to the Maharaja. He either approved or suggested certain modifications. On the approval of the final draft, it was written again in fair handwriting and two seals were affixed. One seal bore "*Akal Sahae Ranjit Singh*" in Gurmukhi, and the other "*Mulahiza shud*" in Persian. Then the document was sent for record to the *Sarishta-e-Hazur* or the Royal Department. There its content was noted and seals bearing the inscription "*Sabt-e-Sarishta-e-Hazur shud*", or "*Darj daftar shudah*" (entered in the books) and "*Az Qarar-e-Hukam-e-Ashraf*", were put on it. In the *Naqal Daftar* its exact copy was preserved. It was then sent to the *Toshakhania* who made the payment.

The Maharaja's orders for appointments and grants of jagirs, titles, robes of honour or special prizes could not be executed without the signatures and the seal of the head of the Finance Department called Diwan.

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The Accounts Department issued receipts to various traders and merchants for goods received for Government. These receipts bore one small seal on one side, and one big rectangular seal on the reverse. Payment was made after receipt of goods. Advance payment was also in practice.

Comment

Under Ranjit Singh there was no imperial or provincial service. There was a large hierarchy of officials both in civil and military service. The Maharaja was in the habit of selecting young men still in their teens. After a short trial he would give them high posts. Missar Beli Ram was appointed head of *Toshakhana* and treasury at the age of 19. Missar Ralia Ram was made Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar district at 16. Diwan Ram Dayal, a lad of 16 was made General and in command of a force which alone reached near Srinagar during the campaign against Kashmir in 1814. Missar Diwan Chand was picked up during a tour and appointed at the age of 15 or 16 as a clerk in the Artillery department and in his early twenties was made Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh army. He conquered Multan and Kashmir provinces. He was the only recipient of the two highest titles of *Zafar Jang* and *Nusrat Nasib*.

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The promotion, demotion and dismissal entirely and exclusively depended upon Maharaja's sweet will. There was no system of annual increments. The Maharaja could give ten or twenty advance increments even after only one year's service. The conferment of jagir was the general rule. He encouraged his officials and ministers to enjoy good living to the fullest extent. The result was that even Diwan Dina Nath well-known for sobriety had a platoon of forty rose-limbed concubines with whom he played in the tank of his garden filled actually with rose water.

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B. TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS

Extent of the Kingdom

Ranjit Singh's kingdom extended from the Karakoram mountains including Gilgit and Ladakh in the north-west and north-east, to river Satluj and the Ghara in the south and south-east. The western boundary starting from the Khaibar Pass stretched along the foot of the Sulaiman mountains upto the neighbourhood of Shikarpur in Sind. The Maharaja also possessed considerable territory to the east of river Satluj. The total area of the kingdom was over one lakh square miles. The total income in 1839 was computed by Shahamat Ali at Rupees three crore, two lakh, twenty-seven thousand, seven hundred and sixty-two (Rs. 3,02,27,762).

Its Population

There was no census system. In 1831, Alexander Burnes estimated the

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total population of Ranjit Singh's Panjab at 35 lakhs. A cavalry officer and Von Orlich put the total population of Panjab, Jammu and Kashmir at 50 lakhs. Panjab in Ranjit Singh's time was thinly populated. Henry Lawrence in *Adventures of an Officer* estimated the population at 15 lakhs. Smyth in his *History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* put the population of the Panjab and Jammu and Kashmir at five millions. Of this about half were Muslims, and of the rest two-thirds were Hindus and one-third Sikhs. Faqir Syed Waheeduddin has given the total population of Ranjit Singh's kingdom at 53,50,000. Alexander Burnes noted in 1831 that there was almost no Sikh population to the west of river Jehlam and that only a few Sikhs could be found 50 km below Lahore. The population was thin in those parts where the soil was sandy or stony, where water was scarce, and climate was rather too hot or too cold. The tracts open to floods in rivers and streams were sparsely populated. In our view 20 lakhs were Muslims including Kashmir, 25 lakhs Hindus and Buddhists and five lakhs Sikhs.

Divisions

The whole kingdom was divided into eight provinces. Each province was split into parganahs, each parganah into taluqas, and a taluqa consisted of 50 to 100 villages. The provinces were: Lahore, Jalandhar, Kangra hills, Jammu, Kashmir, Peshawar, Gujrat or Wazirabad and Multan.

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1. *Lahore*: The province of Lahore consisted of territory situated between rivers Beas, Ghara after its confluence with Satluj and river Chenab. It controlled the districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Dinanagar, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Gugera and Shaikhupura. It was directly administered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Lahore district comprised of Lahore, Kasur and Chunian taluqas. The Amritsar district was divided into Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Ajnala. The Dinanagar district had three taluqas of Dinanagar, Batala and Pathankot. The Sialkot district consisted of Sialkot, Zafarwal, Daska, Pasrur, Rayya and Shakargarh. The Gujranwala district contained Gujranwala, Sharakpur, Hafizabad and Khangah Dogran. The Shaikhupura district had Shaikhupura, Jaranwali and Toba Tek Singh. The Gugera district comprised Gugera, Dipalpur and Baharwal.

2. *Jalandhar*: It was the smallest, but the richest province of the Sikh kingdom. It consisted of two districts of Jalandhar and Bajwara or Hoshiarpur. It contained the taluqas or tahsils of Jalandhar, Nakodar, Rahon, Nawanshahar and Phillaur in the Jalandhar parganah and the

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taluqas of Bajwara, Hariana, Sham Chaurasi, Garhshankar, Una and Mukerian in Bajwara district. The province was dotted with thousands of irrigation wells. Jats and Arains were excellent cultivators. Bajwara was a sub-montane district. The Solasinghi Range of hills separated it from Kangra. The Katar Dhar of the Shivaliks passed through the district. Between these two ranges lay the productive Jaswan Dun. The main cultivators were Rajputs, Jats and Gujars. The following were the governors of the Jalandhar Doab in succession: Diwan Mohkam Chand, his son Diwan Moti Ram, his son Diwan Kirpa Ram; Faqir Aziz-ud-din, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-din, Missar Rup Lal and Shaikh Imam-ud-din.

3. *The Kangra hills*: This province contained Kangra district and several hill states such as Kulu, Saraj, Mandi, Suket, Chamba, Lahul, Spiti and Bilaspur. The Kangra district contained the taluqas of Kangra, Palampur, Nurpur, Dera and Hamirpur. Kangra and Palampur are situated in a beautiful valley. The district is drained by river Beas. Brahmans, Rajputs and Giraths were the best farmers there.

Desa Singh Majithia and his son Lahna Singh were its notable governors. Their main duty was to collect revenue from the district, realize tribute from princes, and to keep them loyal to Lahore Government.

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4. *Jammu*: The Jammu province consisted of the Chenab valley extending from Mirpur on river Jehlam to Kathua near river Ravi. It covered the region lying to the north of the districts of Jehlam, Gujrat, Sialkot and Dinanagar. This province consisted of five districts of Mirpur, Riasi, Udhampur, Jammu and Jasrota. Besides it controlled the States of Kishtwar and Bhadrawah. The province was entrusted to Raja Gulab Singh Dogra.

5. *Kashmir*: The Kashmir province comprised of the Jehlam valley and the valley of Kishanganga. From its conquest by Ranjit Singh in 1819 upto his death in 1839, i.e. in a period of twenty years there were seven governors in succession: Diwan Moti Ram twice, Hari Singh Nalwa, Chunilal, Moti Ram's son Diwan Kirpa Ram, Bhama Singh Ardali, Prince Sher Singh and Colonel Mihan Singh.

6. *Peshawar*: The province of Peshawar came into Ranjit Singh's possession in 1823. From 1823 to 1834 it was administered by Barakzai brothers, Yar Muhammad Khan and Sultan Muhammad Khan. In 1834, Peshawar was brought directly under the control of the Lahore Durbar and Hari Singh Nalwa was its first governor. He was killed in a battle in 1837, and was succeeded by General Avitabile. The Peshawar province was divided into five parganahs of Hazara (3 taluqas), Peshawar (5

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taluqas), Kohat (3 taluqas), Bannu (2 taluqas) and Derah Ismail Khan (3 taluqas)–total 16 taluqas.

7. *Gujrat or Wazirabad*: This province controlled the territory lying between rivers Chenab and Indus. It included six districts of Gujrat, Jehlam, Rawalpindi, Attock, Mianwali and Shahpur. The Gujrat district contained three taluqas of Gujrat, Kharian, and Phalia. The Jehlam district consisted of Jehlam, Chakwal and Pind Dadan Khan. Rawalpindi district comprised of taluqas of Rawalpindi, Kahuta, Gujar Khan and Hasan Abdal. Attock district had four taluqas of Attock, Fatahjang, Pindigheb and Talagang. Mianwali district was divided into Mianwali, Isakhail, and Bhakkar taluqas. The Shahpur district contained Shahpur, Bhera and Khushab.

This was the largest province in area, but the smallest in population. Nine-tenths of the people were Muslims. The people in general were of refractory character. The Maharaja gave charge of this province to the Italian general Paolo de Avitabile. He was given the starting salary of Rs. 5,000 per mensem. In addition large jagirs were conferred upon him later on. He was so strict in maintaining law and order that he executed six Sikhs for having committed theft a second time. He held charge of this province from 1833 to 1837.

8. *Multan*: The Multan province consisted of districts of Multan, Leiah, Jhang, Muzaffargarh and Derah Ghazi Khan. The Multan district contained the taluqas of Multan, Shujabad, Lodhran, Mailsi and Kabirwala. The Leiah district had Leiah and Sinanwan. The Jhang district comprised Jhang, Chiniot, Shorkot and Kot Kamalia. The Muzaffargarh district had Muzaffargarh, Alipur and Mithankot. Derah Ghazi Khan district contained Derah Ghazi Khan, Vehoa, Taunsa, Jampur, Sabzalkot and Rojhan. The province of Multan had five governors: Sukh Dayal Khatri, Sham Singh Peshaurya, Badan Hazari, Mitha Mal Shikarpuria, and Sawan Mal.

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C. THE CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The Central Government

The Maharaja

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the head of the State like the President of India today as well as the head of the Government like the Prime Minister in our own time. He was also the supreme judge like the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

But he was not an absolute ruler or dictator for the following reasons:

1. Ranjit Singh considered himself a servant of the Gurus, and to a large extent he abided by the principles of Sikh religion. In case of a very serious violation his explanation was called for by the central body of Akalis at Amritsar.

2. Sikhism from the very beginning was dominated by the ideal of democracy and democratic spirit pervaded in the system of Sikh administration. Ranjit Singh preserved this spirit.

3. The martial Muslim nobility exercised some check upon him.

4. The Maharaj was fully conscious of the fact that his subjects 5/6 of whom were non-Sikhs, could exercise their divine right to revolt against autocracy and despotism.

The famous German traveller Baron Charles Hugel in 1836 noted that nothing took place throughout the kingdom without his express commands, and he was the soul which animated the entire body. It was a benevolent government working purely in the interest of the people. The Maharaja was healing the wounds sustained by the people during twenty foreign invasions from 1739 to 1799 in 60 years.

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Shahamat Ali was staying with Ranjit Singh in January, 1839. He called the Khalsa government "a pure despotism". Undoubtedly he exercised absolute and arbitrary authority over his subjects. He was the Chief Judge in all matters. He collected revenues and appropriated them as he liked. He appointed and dismissed state officials at will. He controlled all political transactions. He alone made war or peace.

As a result of personal experience Alexander Burnes observed about Ranjit Singh's government: "Here we find despotism without its rigours, a despot without cruelty and a system of government based on the native institutions of the East".

Ministers

The Maharaja had a number of Ministers for help and guidance. His first Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief was Diwan Mohkam Chand. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by Dhian Singh Dogra of Jammu. His second Commander-in-Chief was Missar Diwan Chand. His successor was Hari Singh Nalwa. The foreign department remained with Faqir Aziz-ud-din throughout the Mahraja's reign. Bhawani Das and after him Dina Nath managed the financial affairs. The Maharaja treated his Prime Ministers with great consideration. Once he was going from Amritsar to Lahore. He ordered the beating of drums to announce the departure. He mounted an elephant and making Diwan Mohkam Chand sit beside himself in the royal seat, marched towards Lahore.

The Cabinet

In 1836 Hugel stated that in accordance with the sacred number of five Ranjit Singh's cabinet consisted of the following persons according to their rank: (1) Dhian Singh, Prime Minister and Home Minister, (2) Jamadar Khushhal Singh, (3) Raja Suchait Singh, (4) Faqir Aziz-ud-din, Foreign Minister, (5) Faqir Nur-ud-din. He forgot to mention Diwan Dina Nath, Finance Minister.

The entire control of all the departments was in the Maharaja's own hands, and the initiative for policy-making rested with him. In important matters he consulted the holy *Granth Sahib*. All the above ministers acted as secretaries. The Prime Minister held the charge of the Deorhi also.

The office of the Deorhiwala was very important. He was the Lord Chamberlain or a nobleman charged with the direction and management of Maharaja's private apartments. He was the channel for conveying the petitions and representations of the people, and carrying the Maharaja's orders regarding them into effect. He controlled the interviews with the

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Maharaja outside the public durbar. Even a Minister or Commander-in-Chief could not see the Maharaja without his permission. This post brought him rich presents from visitors.

The Provincial Government

The Nazim

The head of a province was called Nazim. He was in-charge of civil, financial, judicial and military affairs in his own province. His main duty was to remit the sum for which the province had been farmed out to him punctually and regularly. If there were no reports of serious maladministration against him, the Maharaja seldom interfered with him. The Governors managed the whole business without making any reference to Lahore and seldom submitting a report. Ranjit Singh's instructions were that no complaint should come to him from their territory, and the amount of annual revenues should be paid into the treasury without any delay.

In addition to their military commands, foreigners were given charge of civil administration. Ventura, a Frenchman was the Governor of Derah Ghazi Khan and the borderland of Sind. Avitabile, an Italian, held charge first of Gujrat province with Wazirabad as his capital, and then of Peshawar. Harlan, an American, was Governor of Jasrota and later of Gujrat. John Holmes succeeded him at the latter place, Colonel Bellasis was Governor of Kangra.

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Each district and province was farmed out to the highest bidder. The provincial governors after paying the fixed amount of contract could keep the surplus as their salaries and expenditure of administration. The Governor could realise as much as he could without causing complaints to the Maharaja and after paying his dues he accumulated enormous fortunes in many cases.

The Kardar

The Kardar was in-charge of a parganah or district. In the provincial administration. Under Ranjit Singh the Kardar was a pivotal functionary. He exercised enormous fiscal, revenue and judicial powers in his district. He was a Collector, Settlement Officer, Treasury Officer, Magistrate, Judge, Excise and Customs Commissioner. He was appointed by the Nazim with the approval of the Maharaja. His main duties were to maintain peace, collect revenue and administer justice. He came into direct contact with the people and knew all about their feelings and sentiments towards the government. There were fifty-one Kardars in the kingdom.

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Many writers have condemned him as a monster of graft, corruption and oppression. No doubt, the Kardar had many occasions to indulge in bribery, favouritism and nepotism. Yet, the sword of Damocles involving confiscation, fine, dismissal and imprisonment by Ranjit Singh was always hanging above his head.

The Kardar could keep himself in office by remitting the amount of revenue fixed for him regularly and punctually. This he could do by maintaining peace in his district, by developing cultivation, and by encouraging trade. In 1847, John Lawrence, then acting as British Resident at Lahore, reported that "the whole country was under cultivation". Denzil Ibbetson recorded that in East Panjab, then under British control, famines occurred in 1812, 1817, 1824, 1833, 1837, 1841 and 1842 and none in Ranjit Singh's kingdom. Ibbetson further wrote that in the provinces of Lahore and Multan, "the Sikh rule was stronger and more equitable".

A Few Cases of Complaints

On 2 August, 1813, the zamindars of village Bahadurpur in district of Gujrat complained to the Maharaja that the revenue collectors had carried away all their household effects. Ranjit Singh immediately sent a letter to the Kardar and sent a staff bearer with the zamindars ordering him to restore all their property.

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It was reported on 9 August, 1813, that the Kardar of Wazirabad had embezzled Rs. 35,000 out of the revenues. He was fined Rs. 40 daily during his tenure of office.

On 9 July, 1816, all the zamindars of the village of Hamidpur, each presenting one rupee as *nazar* submitted that the garrison master of Gobindgarh had seized five pairs of their oxen. Ranjit Singh replied that he would be strictly ordered to return the same to them.

Nihal Singh Atariwala stated that the zamindars of Chosa and Chatarpur had come with a complaint against the tyranny practised by the revenue collector under Kanwar Kharak Singh in demanding dues from them in excess of the assessment. Ranjit Singh replied that he would be stopped from doing so.

On 10 July, 1816, a note was sent to the revenue collector of Gujrat, telling him that he was practising great cruelty towards his subjects and misappropriating their property, warning him that he was likely to be punished.

Some Good Examples

Missar Ram Kishan was the Kardar of Gujranwala district in 1839. He

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had to pay one lakh of rupees annually. His administration was just and efficient.

Lahna Singh Sandhanwalia was the Kardar of Hazara district in 1839. Shahamat Ali found his administration "peaceful". He was required to pay a sum of Rs. 45,000 annually. He could not collect this amount, and no action was taken against him.

Mahu Singh was the Kardar of Khatar territory. Shahamat Ali wrote: "He is of a very respectable Sikh family, and is a good, frank, and plain spoken person".

Masson, an American, who travelled on foot in the disguise of a Muslim beggar from village to village right across Panjab during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign wrote that the Sikh rule in the Panjab was much better and more prosperous than that of the British in other parts of India.

Checks on Nazims and Kardars

1. The Maharaja had newsriters called *Waqaenawis* in every quarter of his kingdom. They sent regular reports daily or weekly of what was going on in the territory assigned to each of them.

2. The terms of office of Nazims and Kardars depended on good behaviour and goodwill of the Maharaja, who awed the state officials, who were terrified of him in obedience.

3. An appeal could be made by anyone to the Maharaja on a piece of plain paper.

4. The Maharaja often went on unexpected tours, the destination being known only to him. This fact was noted by Shahamat Ali who wrote: "It is an invariable rule with him never to mention his object to anyone until the time for execution has arrived."

5. He deputed special agents of tried virtue to visit certain places and invite complaints from time to time.

6. Ranjit Singh called for reports of the decisions delivered by Nazims and Kardars.

7. The Maharaja was easily accessible to common people. He had placed a box near his palace in which any person could put in an application to seek justice personally.

8. He held durbars in the morning from 8 to 12 in the Saman Burj and "sometimes on the plain under the shade of a tree or a camp". In the afternoon he received the petitions of the people.

9. Waheeduddin says that "the principal check on the officers, however, was a centrally administered and vigilant financial control".

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10. Another method to check corruption was to confiscate officers' property at their death, but make provisions for their heirs.

Recruitment to Services

The services, whether civilian or military or high or low, were open to all citizens of the State without any distinction of caste, creed and religion and were filled up on the basis of merit.[1] The Muslims were looked upon as pillars of the empire, and were treated with great consideration even much better than the Sikhs or Hindus. They were appointed to high positions of trust and confidence, even in sensitive departments such as external affairs, artillery, imperial treasury and personal physicians, and they were manned by Muslims. His Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Commander-in-Chief from 1806 to 1825 were all Hindus.

Court Language

Though a Sikh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made Persian the language of his courts. All *firmans* and *parwanas* were issued in Persian. All the records of the State were kept in Persian. The seekers of government service, particularly in civil departments were required to have some knowledge of Persian.

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All the departments of the government bore Persian names such as *Sarsishta-e-Hazur* (Department of Revenue) and *Daftar-e-Toshakhana* (Department of Regalia).

The Maharaja granted titles consisting of Persian words. To Lahna Singh Majithia was granted the title of *Husam-ud-Daulah* (Sword of the State). Missar Diwan Chand received two titles of *Zafar Jang* (Victorious in War) and *Fatah-wa-Nusrat Nasib* (Winner of Victory).

The guns manufactured at Lahore were given Persian names such as Zafar Jang, Nashtar Jang, and Sher Dahan.

News Service

On 9 September, 1813; Ranjit Singh ordered Jai Karan Das to engage in service one hundred messengers together with Mutsaddis for the purpose of recording news and send them over to the north-west frontier, Jalalabad and Kabul so that they might be sending daily news of those places. This was the beginning of a regular news service in foreign countries. The regular news service in his kingdom already existed.

[1] Latif, *Punjab*, p. 398.

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Mail Service

On 21 November, 1813, mail service by horses was set up upto the fort of Attock. A large number of *harkaras* were appointed to carry mail and bring news. Chuni Lal was appointed their headman.

Messengers

On 21 November, 1813, messengers who brought news of Multan were granted four villages in jagir.

Fast Runners

Ranjit Singh had formed a separate body of fast runners to carry important and urgent messages. They often travelled 100 km daily.

The Begar System

Begar is synonymous to corvee. It implied unpaid forced labour imposed by feudal lords upon serfs or by government on poor labour class. It existed in capitalistic feudal states all the world over.[1] Its main reason was absence of good roads and lack of means of transport, particularly at the time of large scale military operations.

In 1870 Francis Younghusband, Resident in Kashmir, wrote: "The means of communications were rough and rude in the extreme, so that men instead of animals had to be used as beasts of burden".[2]

The inhabitants of the Panjab were pedestrians. Few had riding animals. The rich people had ponies and horses. The farmers used bullock carts over short distances. Nobles rode in palanquins carried on shoulders of men.

In a feudal state the ruler owned everything. The masses had no part in the building of national economy. Resources were limited. Money was scarce. The heavy expenditure of transportation of essential commodities could not be easily met. This hard problem was solved by forcible conscription of poor rural people. They were used as pack-animals to carry big loads. There was no question of any payment. They were called *begaris*, and the system was known as *begar*. Crushed in spirit and mind, the people lost all power of resistance. The feudal chief ruled fearlessly.

The people in general were tied to their lands, hearths and homes, and were afraid to travel beyond the bounds of their area. The roads were infested by wild beasts as well as by thieves and robbers. The chances were that a person who went on a long journey seldom returned home

[1] *Encoclopaedia of Social Sciences*, vol. III, p. 34.
[2] *Kashmir*, p. 177.

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safe and sound.

Willing labour was not easily available. The ruler was impelled to resort to forced labour upon his subjects in order to maintain a regular supply of essential commodities to far-flung military fortifications for defence of the empire, and for construction of roads and bridges. Thus the ruler could manage to fight against his enemies and to keep up supplies of essential goods in all parts of his kingdom or empire.

Aurangzeb visited Kashmir in 1665. Bernier who was present in the Emperor's camp says that 30,000 porters were employed to carry the imperial camp luggage from Bhimbar to Srinagar. A porter was paid ten French Crowns for every 100 lbs weight of luggage.[1]

The Sikhs occupied Kashmir in 1819. The Afghan rule had reduced them to a miserable condition. The Sikh rulers did not improve their lot. The confusing system of land tenure and revenue collection as inherited from the Afghans was continued. The peasantry remained as bounded serfs.[2]

A large number of labourers were employed in the transport of military supplies, luggage of high officials from one part of the country to another on fresh appointments and transfers. Even an ordinary soldier or a sepoy or orderly in a civil office could command a poor *chuhra* or *chamar* to do any work for him. Moorcroft and Hugel give examples of poor villagers being forced to do unpaid labour for their Sikh masters.[3]

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Moorcroft noted that when he was leaving Kashmir some of the people employed by him were seized by the Sikhs to act as unpaid porters. They were tied together by a cord fastened to their arms, and they were driven away along the road. To prevent their escape at night their legs were bound with ropes.[4]

Hugel

"The Panjab bearers rarely receive any remuneration in return for their services; on the contrary, they are compelled by the government, without whose permission nobody can travel, to perform their duty gratuitously; I had engaged, however, to give the poor fellows a sum, which, according to the low price of rice, their only food in one day, have supplied their whole family for a month".[1] Officials under Sikh administration

[1]Francis Bernier. *Travels in the Mughal Empire*. rep., p. 392.
[2]D.C. Sharma. *Kashmir Under Sikhs*. p. 275.
[3]Ibid., p. 274.
[4]P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*. p. 627.
[1]*Travel*. pp. 34-35.

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employed by force persons on their own cultivable lands and in the construction of their private buildings and other petty jobs without paying the labourers.

In April, 1838, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent a deputation to meet Lord Auckland, Governor General of India, at Shimla. On 25 April, 1838, at Ludhiana, Captain Wade forced 500 men into begar to carry the luggage of the deputation via Rupar, Nalagarh and Subathu.

Comment

The Maharaja appointed officers himself. Their promotion, transfer, dismissal depended absolutely on his sweet will. All the departments of administration were under his personal control. He was a benevolent despot.

The people wanted peace, protection of their life, honour and property, freedom to pursue unhindered their religion and avocations, light taxes, sympathetic and honest officers, cheapest justice at their door, and free access to the sovereign in case of need. Most of these things they got.

Thus Ranjit Singh was a despot without cruelty, a sovereign without severity, a judge without any prejudices, a conqueror kind to the conquered and the displaced, a ruler with compassion, a lover of charity and generosity.

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CHAPTER 21

Financial Administration

Land Revenue

The main source of income to the government was land revenue. Out of the total income of the kingdom of three crores, two crores came from this source. A peasant was looked upon as the very foundation of government treasury. Land was very rarely transferred. A village was called *mauza* and the landholder was known as zamindar. He was responsible to the government for the payment of land revenue. The state share ranged from one-tenth to one-half of the produce depending on the nature of the soil, means of irrigation and distance from the market. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh three methods were tried to determine the government share.

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(i) The Batai System

In the earlier period of the reign the *Batai* system prevailed. It varied from one-half to one-third of the gross produce. This system had a great defect. The assessment was made after harvesting. A large number of men were required to keep a watch on the cultivators from the time of sowing to that of harvesting to check misappropriation by the cultivators. A greater vigilance was needed at the time of harvesting to check concealment of grain.

(ii) Kankut

In the middle part of the reign *Kankut* system was adopted. The government officials made an estimate of the gross produce from the standing ripe crop with the help of experts. Then the state share was charged after harvesting. It was a better system than *Batai*, but it might

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not yield the estimated quantity.

(iii) Auction

About 1835 assessment was put to auction, and given to the highest bidder for 3 to 6 years. The contractor was required to submit a detailed report about the grain, money and other things realized from cultivators.

Revenue was collected in kind. It was beneficial to the cultivators, because he paid a share of the actual produce. The cultivator was allowed to deduct from the gross produce the customary dues of village menials, state officers and others. This generally amounted from one-tenth to one-fifth of the gross produce.

Towards the close of the reign option was given to zamindars to pay land revenue either in kind or in cash as it suited their convenience. In certain crops such as sugar-cane, cotton, tobacco, poppy, indigo, fodder for cattle, fruits or vegetables, a correct estimate could not be made, and so the landholders were required to pay in cash. On such crops the normal charge was one rupee for a *kachcha* bigha or a fixed quantity of the produce. For example in a mango garden of ten trees, entire fruit of one tree went to the government.

The Plough or Well Basis

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At certain places assessment was made on plough basis. Fifteen acres was made a unit cultivable by one team of bullocks. The well basis was applied to irrigated land. A unit of land was fixed which could be irrigated by a well, and assessment was made per unit, and was applied to the whole irrigated area.

There were two harvests in Panjab, spring crops of April-May called *Asarhi* or *Rabi*, and autumn crops of October-November known as *Sawani* or *Kharif*. At the end of each harvest in May and October, the revenue collectors under the directions of kardars collected land revenue from each village. It was the duty of the kardar to collect revenues at proper time and deposit them in the state treasury. Failure was fatal. Four rupees for two bighas was the fixed rate for rich soil, three rupees if it contained one-fourth of sand, two if it had a half, and one where the sand was three-fourths of the quantity.

Moorcroft mentions another method introduced at the suggestion of Mirza Mal of Churu in Rajasthan, Ranjit Singh's chief financial adviser. It was based on the analysis of soil. A given quantity of earth was put into a fine muslin sieve. It was washed with water until all the mud was carried through and only sand was left. Its proportion to the whole was worked

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out and assessment was fixed according to it.

Roughly speaking the proportion of the net produce came out as follows:

Cultivator's share	55.00
Proprietor's share	7.50
Government share	37.50
Total	100.00

Remission and Taqavi Loans

Remission was granted in case of famine, flood, locusts, troop's movements, or Maharaja's camp. Even grain was given free to cultivators for sowing and subsistence. A peasant was provided with money for implements, cattle and seed. Such loans were called *taqavi* loans. In 1833 when a famine broke out in Kashmir, the Maharaja sent thousands of donkeys laden with wheat and rice for free distribution among famine-stricken people from mosques and temples. In 1836 Kharak Singh was sent to Multan to see that troops did not spoil the crops on both sides of the road.

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Farming System

In order to devote his attention to the development of army and maintenance of law and order, he introduced farming system. It meant giving some area to a contractor for a certain sum of money to be paid punctually and regularly in state treasury. Clear instructions were given not to oppress the peasants. In case of complaints after verification fines, confiscations, and imprisonment were certain. Only two examples of farming are given below:

The following taluqas were farmed out to Diwan Singh for one year from October, 1816 to September, 1817, for a sum of Rs.2,50,000.

Ahmadabad	Rs. 85,000.00
Dhanni	Rs. 62,000.00
Pathankot	Rs. 30,000.00
Sharakpur	Rs. 15,000.00
Shahdara	Rs. 13,000.00
Hariana	Rs. 30,000.00
Katha and Dhak, etc.	Rs. 15,000.00
Total	Rs. 2,50,000.00

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For the year 1817-18 Jammu was farmed out to Diwan Bhawani Das for one lakh of rupees.

Jagirdari System

Ranjit Singh granted jagirs to Sikh sardars, courtiers and military men on feudatory military service. The jagirdar had to maintain a special contingent of troops fixed according to the nature of the estate. In addition a jagirdar kept in his service a band of workers. Some of them were assigned certain villages under the farming system for fixed amounts. The chief jagir was managed personally by the grantee. The control of the farming estate was entrusted to the care of the local money-lender usually called Shahji.

At the proper time he paid the land revenue and realized it from the cultivators later. The general rate at which a cultivator was charged by the jagirdar was one-third of the grain and one-fourth of *bhusa*.

Defects in the Land Revenue System

The system of revenue collection by the Maharaja suffered from certain defects. (1) The income of the state varied every year, and it could be determined only at the end of each harvest. (2) The state had to employ a large number of officials and men to keep watch over the cultivators at harvest time to check fraudulent practices. (3) In some cases kardars and other officers charged more than the fixed share. (4) The farmers of revenue could collect from the people as much as they could so long as no complaint reached Ranjit Singh. Where the people were less warlike, the revenue officers and farmers had no fear. According to Griffin Kashmir was "ground to powder by Sirdar Hari Singh Nalwa." The Jalandhar Doab was squeezed dry by the tax-gatherers of Shaikh Ghulam Muhai-ud-din. (5) Generally one-half of the gross produce was demanded. The cultivators insisted on paying one-third or at the most two-fifths. When their demand was not accepted, they resorted to fraudulent practices. (6) The pay of the junior public servants of the state was made by assignments on kardars. This enabled policemen and others to live at the cost of villagers until the amount of order was paid by the headmen, and they were considered on duty. On the other hand contumacious zamindars did not pay in full to the powerless state employees.

Hugel says that the exactious were carried to a certain point. If they exceeded this, the people emigrated, and the land was left uncultivated. In those days there was a dearth of men and not of land.

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Coins

Ranjit Singh's currency consisted of gold mohar, Nanakshahi silver rupee and Mansuri paisa. The mohar was equal to 15 Nanakshahi silver rupees or 16 East Indian Company's rupees. Its circulation was small. The Nanakshahi silver rupee was common throughout the Sikh state. Both coins were minted at Amritsar, Mansuri paisa was an uncouth lump of copper bearing no inscription. Five or six of them made an anna. They were imported from Jagadhri on the Yamuna. The Maharaja stopped their import. The merchants refused to supply the copper metal which they got from Mussoorie popularly called Mansuri. Ranjit Singh allowed their importation.

Taxation

Other Sources of Income

Besides land revenue the other important sources of income were customs, excise and monopolies. The monopoly of salt brought about 8 lakhs of rupees and customs about 16 lakhs. Mohrana was the income from judiciary. Abwabs consisted of several small taxes. A professional tax was imposed on artisans. It was one rupee per house. The inferior workmen such as barbers (*hajjam*), washermen, water carriers (*kahar*), colouring people (*lalaris*), cobblers, etc. paid 8 annas per house annually. Traders paid from one to two rupees per hand.

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Lapsed jagirs were another source. The jagirs were granted only for life of the grantee. The income from jagirs amounted to about 88 lakhs of rupees according to Shahamat Ali and over one crore according to Prinsep.

Nazarana was another source of income. It was a tribute paid to the Maharaja on different occasions by his vassals. The defeated princes when allowed to retain their territory paid an annual tribute. Below a brief reference is made to some of them.

Collections

January, 1831: Lahna Singh Majithia was ordered to collect "a large sum of money from the country of Nakkas", and to see that "the zamindars may have prosperous houses and households".[1]

February, 1831: Avitabile was ordered to collect revenues from the territory of Hallowal and to ensure comfort of the inhabitants.[2]

[1]Umdat, Eng. trans., p. 3.
[2]Ibid., p. 10.

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End of April, 1831: Jawala Singh Bharania was ordered to collect "large sums of money from the mountainous regions of Kangra, Rehlu and other places," "always to keep in mind the prosperity of the people".[1]

23 June, 1831: Ranjit Singh instructed Hari Singh Nalwa to realize yearly revenues from Chach Hazara "in proper manner and to take care to keep always before his eyes the welfare of the poor and the weak".[2]

13 June, 1832: Missar Amir Chand, nephew of Jassa Missar and Ram Dayal Peshauria were ordered to collect large sums of money from Jalandhar, Rahon and other places keeping in view propriety and pleasure of the zamindars. Rs.700 were given to Amir Chand.[3]

31 December, 1832: Missar Rup Lal was appointed to collect Rs.5,22,000 from the kardars and jagirdars of the Doaba but he must make the collections keeping in view the prosperity of the country.[4]

17 June, 1832: Maharaja told Burnes that he had learnt from the clerk appointed to attend on Avitabile through his letter that Avitabile was embezzling the revenue of Peshawar to a great extent.[5]

Contracts

January, 1831: The contract of Kangra hills and Sujanpur was given to Desa Singh Majithia for an annual sum of Rs.65,000. He was emphatically told "to realize the amount of revenue with a sweet tongue".[6]

June, 1832: The total assessment with Ram Chand Kardar of Amritsar was Rs.1,01,000. Of this Rs. 86,000 had been realized. The remainder Rs.15,000 were to be paid by him.[7]

December, 1832: The region of Gujrat, Mirpur, Chomak and Kurianwala was granted to Shiv Dayal, son of Diwan Moti Ram for Rs. 2,10,000, while Rs.21,000 were granted to him in lieu of salary. The Maharaja ordered that he should engage himself in making collections from his country, keeping in view the prosperity of the region and the satisfaction of the zamindars.[8]

Customs

On 16 May, 1839, the Maharaja approved the following scale of

[1]Ibid., p. 26.
[2]Ibid., p. 54.
[3]Ibid., p. 142.
[4]Ibid., p. 161.
[5]Ibid., p. 461.
[6]Ibid., p. 5.
[7]Ibid., p. 146.
[8]Ibid., p. 159.

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customs duties on exports and imports:

Shawls	per maund (40 kg)	Rs. 10.00
Opium	"	Rs. 7.50
Indigo	"	Rs. 2.50
Cloth of all sorts	"	Re. 0.25
Sugar, molasses, oil, ghi, etc.	"	Re. 1.00
Drugs, fruits, metals, dyes	"	Re. 0.25
Grains of all sorts	"	Re. 0.12

Exactions

When the Maharaja sustained heavy losses, he made them up by extra exactions from the governors and kardars and other officials. Ranjit Singh's expedition to Kashmir in 1814 had failed due to lack of organization and treachery of his tributary chiefs of Jammu and Kashmir hills. The courtiers and officials were forced to make up the loss.[1]

He demanded two lakhs of rupees from the Faqir brothers. Faqir Aziz-ud-din pleaded that he had only Rs. 60,000 with him, which he immediately offered to the Maharaja.

At the close of 1824 Ranjit Singh was faced with a serious financial deficit. He decided that the generals and soldiers should forego two months' salary. The most highly paid were the generals and soldiers of the Fauj-e-Khas under command of Ventura and Allard. On 3 January, 1825 the Maharaja deputed Diwan Bhawani Das to persuade the French generals to accept the proposal for themselves and their troops. The generals did not agree. The Maharaja was enraged, and summoned the generals to his presence at a public durbar. On seeing them Ranjit Singh drew his sword out of scabbard, rushed towards them by hurling extremely abusive language on them. He was held up by other courtiers, and brought back to his seat. He kept on threatening them with a pistol while continuing abuses. After 4 or 5 days Ventura presented himself before the Maharaja, placed his forehead at his feet, begged forgiveness, and agreed to the proposal. The Maharaja assured him of his kindness and favour. Ventura was then drawing a salary of Rs.2,500 per mensem, with a jagir, free residence and other benefits.[2]

April, 1835: In 1835 Dost Muhammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, threatened Peshawar. The Maharaja led his army against him. Dost Muhammad fled away without fighting. This had cost the Maharaja enormously. He

[1]Kahan Singh Kaluria, *Tairkh-e-Rajagan Jammu wa Kashmir*, Lahore, 1932,pp. 109-10).
[2]Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, I, 217.

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demanded a special *nazarana*. Mihan Singh Governor of Kashmir quietly paid, but increased the tax on Gujars from Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 12,000, and on traders and merchants from Rs. 11,000 to Rs. 20,000.[1]

Jagirs

14 May, 1839: On the death of Megh Singh Kakar half of the estate was released to his widow and sons and the other half was confiscated.[2]

16 May, 1839: *Nazarana* for the release of the estate of Megh Singh Kakar was settled at Rs. 30,000 with his wife.[3]

27 May, 1839: A letter was issued to Rae Gobind Jas that he must release the estate of Megh Singh Kakar for a *nazarana* of Rs. 28,000.[4]

Octroi

The octroi levied at Amritsar was farmed to Sukh Dayal for Rs. 13 lakhs.[5]

Sale of Offices

"The Noble Sarkar offered the office of Mir Munshi to Munshi Devi Das for one lakh of rupees. He requested the Noble Sarkar to grant him some concession in that amount. The Noble Sarkar said that more places had come into his possession and therefore he should willingly agree to it. Devi Das accepted and promised to abide by all the orders of the Noble Sarkar".[6]

15 November, 1814, Amritsar: Ranjit Singh told Munshi Devi Das that he could get contract of Maharaja's seal for Rs.1,75,000. He agreed to it.[7]

5 February, 1816: Hakim Ruhullah Khan stated that Munshi Devi Das took bribes from everybody. The Munshi who was present replied that he had acquired everything through the blessings and glory of his master and repudiated the accusation. At this the Noble Sarkar smiled.[8]

Salt

There were eight salt mines in Ranjit Singh's kingdom, and only four were worked. Tax in salt mines was increased in due course of time from

[1]Sharma, 243, n 8.
[2]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 670.
[3]Ibid., p. 673.
[4]Ibid., p. 679.
[5]Diwan Amar Nath, in Bhatia, p. 173.
[6]Monograph, XVII, p. 43.
[7]Ibid., p. 180.
[8]Ibid., p. 230.

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four lakhs to fourteen lakhs. The sale of salt brought an income of Rs. 4,63,675.[1]

August, 1836: A letter from Raja Gulab Singh intimated that on account of excessive rains, the river Jehlam had overflooded upto Pind Dadan Khan and that salt to the value of six lakhs had been washed away. The Maharaja said that the Nazim of Kashmir sent water to the Jehlam and the salt went to the territory of Diwan Sawan Mal. So they both must pay half and half for the loss. The matter would be referred to Wade and something would be given to the merchants who had suffered. Lala Kishan Chand was instructed to consult Wade in this matter.[2]

Wade replied that it was a matter of kindness if the Maharaja recognized the claims of the merchants.[3]

Hari Singh Nalwa had obtained large sums in Kashmir by forced exactions. In the North-West Frontier he charged the Lahore government heavy expenditure for suppressing Yusafzai revolts, and pocketed a good portion of it.[4] On his death the Maharaja seized eighty lakhs from his sons.

Tributes

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April 22, 1831: Jamadar Khushhal Singh was ordered to leave for hills and realize tribute from the Rajas of Mandi, Suket, Kulu and Chamba.[5]

July, 1833: Mandi yielded Rs.1,11,000, Kulu 56,000, Suket 25,000.[6]

30 March, 1839: Wazir Dhari of Mandi presented Rs.12,000 and several pods of musk. The Sarkar asked Dina Nath how much balance was due from the Raja of Mandi. He replied that Rs. 18,000 of the balance and Rs. 5,000 of the *sirwarna*, total Rs. 23,000. Sarkar issued orders for the realization of the balance.[7]

Giani Gian Singh's Observation

Giani Gian Singh, a Jat Sikh of the Gurus, spent most of his life in travelling from village to village in the Panjab in search of material for the history of the Sikhs during the second half of the nineteenth century. He wrote eight volumes in Urdu under the title of *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* and one huge volume of over a thousand pages in Gurmukhi entitled

[1]Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Panjabi edn., p. 217.
[2]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 302.
[3]Ibid., p. 304.
[4]Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 494n.
[5]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 24.
[6]Ibid., p. 162.
[7]Ibid., p. 645.

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Panth Prakash. He draws the following portrait of Ranjit Singh's revenue administration in *Panth Prakash* on p. 878:

> "He farmed out the country to contractors (*ijaradar*). They sucked the blood of Jats. In case of a good harvest the State share was taken under Batai system. When crops failed, an unaccountable amount of revenue was charged. There was no fixed plan. They had to seek redress from contractors themselves. The Maharaja did not listen to them. The contractors employed Rohillas as their servants. They were extremely cruel in recovering dues. They tied up long hair and beards of Jats with pegs (*Kilyan nal*), and by whipping broke their skin, (*Mar mar kar chamri utar dete*). They put heavy loads on their heads, and then would make them stand with a cot between their legs. With legs parted in this way they kept them standing for long. The poor oppressed people cried for mercy, (*Bahori, Bahori pukar de*), but the tyrannical Rohillas would not listen to them. By slapping and shoe-beating their faces were swollen. Many (*anekon*) had their hands and legs bound and were kept standing. They seized their womenfolk and let in rats and mice into their trousers."

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Giani Gian Singh adds: "God listened to the complaints of the people (*parja*) and granted them the British Raj. The comfort (*sukh*) enjoyed by the Jats now (*hun*) was never experienced under any king, raja or Maharaja".

Comment

There was no proper system of maintaining accounts in the early part of Maharaja's reign. Ranjit Singh possessed an excellent memory, and he depended upon it for various amounts of income and expenditure. During this period Rama Nand Sahu of Amritsar managed Maharaja's finances. As his kingdom expanded, he felt the need for organizing a regular department. He invited Bhawani Das to take up this work. The Diwan joined his service in the beginning of 1808.

To begin with Bhawani Das set up separate treasuries at important district headquarters such as Lahore, Amritsar, Jalandhar and Gujrat. These treasuries were required to maintain a regular account of all incomes and expenditures. At the capital he established about 15 departments called Daftars which dealt with civil and military accounts separately.

To meet the expenses of his army and his lavish generosity and charity, he taxed almost every article of daily consumption and every profession.

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But the amounts charged were rather low. Further, on account of perfect peace in the country established by him after nearly one hundred years' anarchy, and complete freedom of religion which the people experienced after 800 years, and his way of simple living like a common man in the country, without a crown and a throne, made him immensely popular with all classes of his subjects who cherished and loved him from the bottom of their hearts.

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Gurmukhi

Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash,* 878.

Persian

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Umdat, Eng. trans., 3, 5, 10, 24, 26, 134, 146, 159, 161, 162, 172, 302, 364, 468, 645, 670, 673, 679.

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CHAPTER 22

Judicial System

Crude but Popular

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's judicial administrative machinery might appear rough and crude today, but it suited the social and political conditions of those times. It was efficient and it established almost perfect justice, peace and order in the country. In those days people did not tell lies and confessed guilt without any alloy. Evidence was sure and straight. The matter was decided there and then in a few minutes and punishment was awarded on the spot.

In fact very few cases came up before judicial officers from countryside. The village panchayats dealt with them. It was only in towns and cities that judges had to decide cases placed before them. Even the Maharaja received cases of petty thefts and minor crimes and decided them on the spot.

Principles applied in Courts

1. *No written law*: There was no codified law to decide judicial cases. The procedure was simple and quick. Judgements were generally based on old traditions, prevalent practices, sacred scriptures, family customs and circumstantial evidence. Steinbach says that custom and caprice determined the judgement. Great importance was attached to sworn testimony of the accused and witnesses. The evidence was mainly oral. In the districts of Peshawar and Hazara on account of the lawless nature of the inhabitants punishments for the same crime were more stringent than in other places. Ranjit Singh tried to prepare a code of law. A Hindustani Bahadur Singh was engaged to do this work. Sohan Lal Suri who later on was appointed court chronicler was given to him as a clerk.

2. *Customary law*: The customary law of a particular region or community

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was based on previous history and prevailing social order was applied. Ownership of land, relations between landlords and cultivators, cases relating to marriage and criminal cases of theft, robbery and murder were all regulated by customary law and usage.

3. *Religion*: The Qazis decided cases of Muslims in accordance with the laws of the *Shariat*. In the case of Hindus learned pandits interpreted *Manu Smriti*.

4. There was no distinction between civil and criminal cases.

Ten Kinds of Courts

1. *The Village Panchayat*: The village Panchayat was a court of five persons chosen from senior village men of the best reputation and spotless character. One of the five members acceptable to both the parties, the aggressor and the aggressed, occupied the chair. He was called Sirpanch. The village Panchayat dealt with local cases concerning land disputes, betrothal, *karewa* and marriage, *chundabant* or division of property according to the number of wives, *bhaibant* or according to the number of brothers, theft, physical assault, money payment, verbal agreements, rape, illicit sexual relationship, threats, elopement, *thikri pahra* or watch at night, etc.

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Discussion on these was ample, often eloquent and loud, but eventually the decision was unanimous. Their judgements were very fair and impartial. They were quietly accepted even by the most refractory offender. In case of disobedience total excommunication was the punishment.

In spring and summer in the plains people generally wore only loin cloth in villages. An Englishman saw a man going along the road with big spots like those of smallpox on the man's back. He asked him the cause of those spots on the back because smallpox attacked the front. He replied that for a certain offence he had been ordered by the village Panchayat to lie on the ground in which iron nails had been fixed.

The village Panchayat was a powerful tribunal without any legal authority. It successfully functioned in times of war and peace, and in the days of anarchy and revolution. The decision of the Panchayat was considered as one dictated by God. *Panchon mien Parmeshar* was the firm belief and faith of the people. An appeal against the judgement of the Panchayat could be made to the Kardar, but it rarely happened.

2. *Caste Panchayats*: There were caste Panchayats also in the countryside. They consisted of men of the same caste belonging to several villages in the neighbourhood. A shepherd had taken a loan from the village moneylender. He refused to pay back the money with interest. The money-

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lender lodged a complaint with the shepherds' Panchayat. Five men from the neighbouring villages arrived and stayed as guests of the debtor until he cleared the loan. Steinbach found that private arbitration also existed in villages. Both the parties could choose an arbitrator through the village Panchayat.

3. *The Kardar's Court*: The head of a parganah was called Kardar. He resembled the deputy commissioner or collector of today. He decided more important and serious cases generally occurring in towns. Punishments were sometimes cruel. In January, 1839, Lieutenant William Barr was at Dinga near Jehlam. He saw a crowd of women and children standing at a particular place bearing signs of sorrow and grief. He rode up to find the cause of their assemblage. He noticed a man lying on the ground at full length. Half an hour before both of his hands had been cut off by the Kardar for having committed a theft. The man lay unconscious and was profusely bleeding. Both of his hands had been carried off to the place of theft for display.

4. *The Adalti's Court*: In important towns such as Amritsar and Gujrat special officers were appointed to decide cases. They were known as Adaltis. Their duties were purely judicial. They dealt with both civil and criminal cases. A glance through some cases directly dealt with by Maharaja Ranjit Singh will be found interesting.

15 March, 1812: Ajodhia Das Adalatwala stated that he had fined the Musalmans of Jalandhar Rs. 2,000 for slaughtering a cow and they were in prison. Ranjit Singh said that Rs. 3,000 should be taken from them before they were set free.

21 August, 1813: Two accountants belonging to the Bania class came from Shahjahanabad and sought employment. They were taken into service and deputed towards Kot Kangra as justices, and were granted money to meet their travelling expenses.

9 September, 1813: Sujan Rae, the *Darogha-e-Adalat* was ordered to continue administering justice by keeping always before his eyes religious honesty and avoiding tyranny or cruelty to any of the poor.

18 September, 1813: Sukh Dayal, agent of Rama Nand Sahu, was told that the work of the administration of justice, the charge of the seal of *munshigiri* and other services connected with them, had been entrusted to him against rupees thirteen lakhs, but that he must administer justice with mercy and with religious honesty (*Dharam-o-karam Adalat*). Folding his hands he replied that on the basis of contract justice according to religious honesty was a bit difficult to administer, because one had to keep an eyes on procuring money by means lawful and illegitimate.

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Ranjit Singh said that out of regard for him he postponed the granting of this contract for one year, and would now watch with what cleverness he would discharge his task. Ranjit Singh granted him one turban, gem, one plume, and one drum carried on a horse. He took those things after presenting one *asharfi* and five rupees as *nazar*.

30 September, 1814: Sujan Rae Adalti who had been imprisoned was set at liberty after paying a *nazarana*.

5 October, 1814: Sujan Rae was appointed Darogha of the battalions on presenting Rs. 5,000 as *nazar*.

3 November, 1814: Khushhal Mal Adalti was emphatically ordered to pay into the treasury of the Noble Sarkar whatever income he had realized from the administration of justice.

2 March, 1815: Ranjit Singh ordered Dhani Sahae *khidmatgar* to bring the income of the administration of justice from Khushhal Mal.

19 January, 1816: Baisakha Singh Adalti of Amritsar reported to the Maharaja that the property of Parit Khatri of Sultanpur Lodi had been confiscated by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia. He would offer Rs. 30,000 to the Maharaja if his property was restored. The Maharaja summoned Mehar Chand, vakil of the Raja, and instructed him to release the said property. He replied that his master was loyal to the Noble Sarkar and would obey his orders.

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9 July, 1816, Lahore: Baisakha Singh, the Darogha of the Adalat, was warned that he would be removed from his office which would be bestowed on some other person if he did not cease to be cruel in the administration of justice.

26 September, 1816: A robe of honour consisting of three garments and a pair of gold bangles was granted to Baisakha Singh of the court of justice. He was warned that he must administer justice strictly in accordance with the principles of religion and the quality of the deed so that no poor person should suffer the least unnecessary trouble.

23 July, 1817: Baisakha Singh presented Rs. 5,000 accruing from the administration of justice.

4 August, 1817: Shiam Das Adalti was given a robe of honour consisting of 3 garments and sent towards Amritsar with instructions to administer justice with great care.

5. *The Nazims's courts*: At the headquarters of a province the Nazim decided serious cases and heard appeals against the judgements of the lower courts.

6. *The Adalat-e-Ala*: At Lahore, the capital of the kingdom, there was a High Court called *Adalat-e-Ala*. It was chiefly an appellate court. It heard

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appeals against the judgements of the Kardars and Nazims. The chief justice of the High Court was paid a salary of Rs. 80 per mensem. Other judges receive Rs. 45 a month. Malwa Singh was appointed a judge of the High Court at Lahore. He was advised by the Maharaja to administer justice in consultation with the *Panchas* of the city of Lahore. It means the headmen of various mohallas listened to the cases, and offered their opinions to the judge.

7. *The Ministers' Courts*: The ministers of the central government held their courts pertaining to the cases arising in their own departments. As there were few special officers to administer justice, the heads generally decided both civil and criminal cases.

8. *Jagirdar's Court*: Jagirs, big and small, were frequently granted by the Maharaja to his courtiers, military officers and noted soldiers. A jagirdar possessed certain civil and criminal authority to decide cases of his own jagir.

9. *The Sharia Courts*: The Sharia Courts generally implied the courts of Qazis and Muftis to decide cases of Muslims according to the law of the *Quran*. The Maharaja treated these officers with great consideration, and on the days of Muslim festivals and state occasions he conferred upon them robes of honour and awards.

10. *The Maharaja's Court*: The Maharaja was the fountain head of justice. He constituted the highest court of justice to try fresh cases as well as to hear appeals from all the lower courts. He frequently censured guilty officials for having failed to decide cases honestly.

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Checks

The abuse of authority by the local officials was checked by several devices:

1. Their term of office depended on good behaviour and goodwill of the Maharaja. Every official was fully conscious that his post, prestige, social status and his riches including immovable property solely depended upon Maharaja's favour.

2. An appeal could be made to the Maharaja. It did not cost anything except a piece of paper.

3. The Maharaja often went on unexpected tours without issuing any notice to that effect. From the camp he disappeared in the disguise of an ignorant rustic (*yamla jat*) to inquire into the administration.

4. He deputed special agents of tried virtue to visit certain places and invite complaints.

5. The Maharaja called for reports of the decisions delivered by

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officials in key positions.

6. Ranjit Singh had newswriters at all important places in his kingdom.

7. "When people thought that their particular grievances had not been sufficiently redressed, they sometimes appeared in the middle of the day with flaming torches to indicate that there was darkness and loudly called for redress. Another fashion of the aggrieved parties was to appear in court with straws in their mouths, to indicate that they had been reduced to the condition of mere cattle."

Chances of Miscarriage of Justice

In spite of all these precautions and restrictions miscarriage of justice could take place due to certain factors:

1. The executive and judicial powers were combined.

2. Very poor and inadequate means of communications in those days were obstacles in getting full justice.

3. The corrupt officials maintained their connections with the court through some ministers to escape punishment.

Modes of Chastisement

1. *No capital punishment*: Ordinarily capital punishment was banned. In extreme cases it was referred to the Maharaja who decided it himself. In the beginning of his reign he had to resort to hanging in order to establish peace and order.

Captain A. Mathews at Amritsar on 16 May, 1808, recorded in his diary: "16th, this part of the Punjab, as well as all other parts where the Rajah's authority exists, is under a good police, and safe for travellers; it seldom happening that capital crimes or robberies are committed from the severe example he has lately made by hanging in some instances plunderers and putting to death the male inhabitants of village near which such have been committed, and so salutary has the effect been that single persons travel with their property without apprehension of danger."

Never wantonly did he inflict capital punishment. Mutilation, fines,, imprisonment and confiscation of property were the usual means adopted to punish criminals. Once six Sikhs were captured for thieving. They were imprisoned and after sometime they were set free. They committed thefts a second time and were captured again. The Maharaja sent them to Avitabile, Governor of Gujrat, with orders that they should not be allowed to escape again. On reaching Wazirabad they were immediately hanged. Ranjit Singh summoned Avitabile to Lahore, and in extreme anger asked how he dared to hang his six Sikhs. "I have carried out your

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orders, Sarkar". "What? did I tell you to kill them"? "No Sir, but you ordered me to see that they should not escape again. I thought it was the surest means of preventing their escape". Ranjit Singh laughed at this answer, and took no further notice of it.

Prinsep says that capital punishment was rare. The hardiest criminals were punished with the loss of nose, ears, and hands; this could be stayed for money to be paid at once or within a given time.

2. *Mutilation of limbs*: In cases of theft and robbery mutilation of limbs was in general inflicted. It implied cutting off hands, nose or ears. For example on 5 May, 1830, two naked men were produced before the Maharaja charged with pilfering some melons from a field. They confessed their guilt. As a punishment one lost his nose and the other both of his ears. While bleeding they were driven away. All this was over in five minutes. The Maharaja observed: "Sharp work, Ballasis. We do not take life, but we punish."

3. *Fines*: Greater emphasis was laid on fines than on imprisonment. Almost every crime could be paid for. Fines were imposed according to the capacity of the criminal to pay. In case of non-payment property was attacked or his family was forced to pay. Both the parties paid at the conclusion of the case and not at the beginning. The winner paid *shukrana* or thanks money giving–amounting to one-fourth of the value of the property, and the loser paid *jurmana*. This was the court fees. In case of non-payment property was confiscated or the guilty was imprisoned.

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Osborne, wrote at Lahore in June, 1838: His executions were very prompt and simple, and followed quickly on the sentence: one blow of an axe, and then some boiling oil to immerse the stump in, to stop all effusion of blood, was all the machinery he required for his courts of justice. Five minutes was about the duration of the longest trial at Lahore.

4. *Imprisonment*: 26 October, 1814 Shadi Khan commandant stated that ten thieves had been in prison with him for a long time. He was ordered to release them with a warning.

11 January, 1817 it was stated that a sepoy had made friendship with a loose-woman and killed one of her friends, but had himself been wounded by a gunshot. Ranjit Singh ordered that he must be kept in prison.

5. *Theft*: Stolen property and stolen cattle were traceable by the footprints of the thief and the cattle. When footmarks led to a certain village, the headman had either to trace them beyond his boundary or to produce the thieves and recover the property, or to pay a sum equal to the value of stolen property. In the case of non-compliance the aggrieved

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party was allowed to drive away buffaloes or oxen from the offender's territory.

In case of cattle, the thief, though he might be in possession of the cattle at the time, very seldom returned the same. He gave others in lieu of those stolen. They were often the stolen property from other places.

Sarkari Gwah

The king's evidence was called *murkei*. Nowadays he is called *sarkari gwah*. He was never questioned as to what part of the booty he had received himself. His duty was only to show or point out, or even tell the place or spot where the property was. Then he received from the owner a stipulated sum.

A *murkei* was always ready and sure to inform the owners, for a certain sum. Immediately a long law suit commenced between the parties. The case was not generally finished until the *murkei* had received large sums, equal to the amount of property stolen from the victims. To prevent any further strife, or through fear, the whole of the property was returned by the thief. Besides he had to pay a large sum of money to the *murkei*.

Property Disputes

As people were illiterate. All transactions were made by oral agreements and promises. Questions relating to the right to property were decided by the evidence of the oldest men in the village. Steinbach who served under Ranjit Singh for many years says: "and though these persons give their testimony on oath, money and favours are so unsparingly distributed to ensure a serviceable statement, that perjury is frequent, and justice a mere mockery".

Robbery

22 November, 1810: Ranjit Singh was told that in the night dacoits raided the quarter of goldsmiths at Lahore and carried away property worth Rs. 275. Bahadur Singh in charge of city police station was ordered to produce the robbers before him.

9 August, 1813: Ram Nath Sahu stated that his property which had been robbed by dacoits near Wazirabad had not been discovered and restored to him. Ranjit Singh said: Investigation would be made and his property recovered.

11 July, 1815: A note was sent to the garrison master of Rohtasgarh. He was told that goods like pashmina belonging to certain merchants sent by "Sardar Yar Muhammad Khan from Peshawar on way to Kashmir

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and Amritsar had been plundered by the zamindars of Kundagarh and the dacoits of the neighbourhood of Rohtasgarh. This property should be recovered and the dacoits should be sent to him.

4 September, 1815: The garrison master of Rohtasgarh intimated that the zamindars of that district were committing robberies. Ranjit Singh wrote that he must chastise them.

19 January, 1816: Nasir Khan, the zamindar of Makhad, was ordered to make search for the property of the moneylenders who had been robbed in that district.

8 February, 1816: It was stated that the dacoits and robbers of the district of Manjha had left their villages and were on flight out of fear of Noble Sarkar.

14 February, 1816, Patti: Dal Singh Kallar (a Jat) was ordered to hunt out all the dacoits and robbers in the Manjha.

22 April, 1816: It was stated that the dacoits had killed 15 men of the army on the way. Ranjit Singh kept quiet.

July, 1836: Wade informed the Maharaja that near Pakpattan some of his property and cattle had been looted. The Maharaja immediately summoned Ratan Chand Kardar to come and explain, and hand over the stolen property to Wade.

Baron Charles Hugel travelled from Mussoorie to Shimla, Bilaspur, Jawalamukhi, Jammu, Pir Panjal, Srinagar, Baramulla, Uri, Murree, Hasan Abdal, Attock and back to Jehlam, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Lahore, Amritsar, Jalandhar to Ludhiana on horseback. He stated that anything like a robbery was unknown in the Panjab, and in this respect Panjab was much safer than Hindustan under the British.

15 July, 1837: An Englishman doctor came from Ludhiana, met the Maharaja at Lahore and told him that he was going to Kabul. He requested the Maharaja to depute two sentinels to protect him up to Peshawar. The Maharaja replied that there was not the least fear of any kind of dacoits, etc. from Lahore upto Peshawar and that he could go even with gold utensils in his hand.

Trial by Ordeal

Trial by ordeal was sometimes resorted to. But "a courageous rascal will often escape the admission of guilt by thrusting his hand into boiling oil, or bear a heated ploughshare on the soles of his feet".

Responsibility of Rich Men

Diwan Amar Nath says that in Ranjit Singh's system of justice a rich

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man, though innocent, was held responsible for the crimes of his neighbours. The wealthy people had to pay fines for the offences of the poor people in their village or in the neighbouring mohallas of a town or city.

Miscellaneous Cases

22 December, 1810: Bahadur Singh Thanadar represented that he had arrested two or three persons in a theft case and was making investigation. The Maharaja expressed his dissatisfaction and ordered that the thieves together with stolen property must be produced.

10 December, 1812, Amritsar: A Sikh came to the Deorhi and tried to enter it. There were two sentinels. They checked him. He killed one, wounded another and fled away. Ranjit Singh gave Rs. 20 to the wounded and Rs. 25 for the burial of the deceased.

17 December, 1812, Lahore: As the Rajas Fatah Singh Ahluwalia and Sansar Chand were expected at the court, Ranjit Singh ordered Hukma Singh Thanadar "to open the gates of the city a little wider".

18 April, 1814, Amritsar: It was reported that Yusaf Ali, the *Darogha-e-Adalat*, was out riding when a Sikh in a state of inebriation struck him with a sword and wounded him. The Maharaja ordered the Sikh to be traced with the help of a battalion.

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28 July, 1815: Hukma Singh Thanadar reported the capture of 15 thieves. Ranjit Singh ordered their ears and noses to be cut off and later they were to be banished from the town.

Farmudand gosh wa bini anhara buridah az shahar badar sazand.

19 January, 1816, Amritsar: At the request of the vakil of the Raja of Bhadrawah, it was written to the revenue collector of Dinanagar that pashmina worth Rs. 4,000, property of the Raja, had been stolen in his district, he must recover it promptly and restore it to its owner, or else he was likely to suffer.

11 February, 1816: Khushhal Singh Jamadar said that the sepoys who had gone to arrest and bring the zamindars of the village of Dhariwal did not find them there. They plundered the said village and returned. Ranjit Singh said they had done well.

11 February, 1816, Patti: Two hundred horsemen were despatched to capture and bring the tribe of Kul (in Sirhali area).

10 July, 1816, Lahore: Fifty horsemen were despatched for the protection of the people of a village.

20 May, 1817: Sayyid Imam Bakhsh, the Kotwal of the army, stated

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that he had brought ten thieves after effecting their arrest. He was ordered to mutilate their ears and noses and to turn them out of the army.

Irshad shudah keh gosh-o-bini tarashidah az lashkar badar sazand.

Transgression

May, 1838, Dinanagar: A man "supposed to be a servant of Raja Gulab Singh" was seen on the top of a mango tree overlooking Ranjit Singh's seraglio of dancing girls. He was brought down by a couple of shots, given a sound beating and kept in close confinement till Ranjit Singh held his public durbar. He was produced before the Maharaja. He admitted his guilt. He was deprived of his nose and ears, and was let off. He lay bleeding outside and died in a few hours.

22 January, 1839: Some goods had been stolen from the camp of the Governor-General. Seven thieves had been arrested in the village of Mori. Goods worth Rs. 3,000 had been recovered in kind, and articles worth Rs. 100 only remained to be recovered.

16 May, 1839: An Englishman was coming from Ludhiana to Lahore. On crossing the Satluj, he halted at village Ambanwala. Thieves fell upon him at night. One watchman and two horsemen appointed to be with him were killed. His whole baggage was looted. Missar Beli Ram was ordered to secure restoration of his property. The Maharaja treated him as a guest for a month, then gave him a *doshala* worth Rs. 500, and a bill for Rs. 500 to be realized by him from Sanehwal near Ludhiana.

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Rape

In the records on Ranjit Singh's reign only one case of rape has been traced. It appears the rape cases were few and far between. In the countryside such cases were dealt with by village Panchayats. In those days travelling teachers came to villages to teach 3R's to children. A teacher developed intimacy with a young widow whose son was his pupil. A couple of young men of the village called at his room at midnight, caught hold of the teacher and tied him with a rope. He was led to a distant sugarcane field, and tied to a mango tree which stood in the middle of the field. He was beaten black and blue and was kept there for two days and two nights and was then let off. He never appeared in that locality again.

In Multan province under Sawan Mal's orders, all girls of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were married at the age of 12 or 13. If the parents

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delayed, the Kardars married them at government cost to suitable boys.

The following case was reported to the Maharaja.

18 August, 1815, Lahore: A woman wearing a sacred thread was sitting at the gate complaining that the nephew of Rama Nand* had committed rape on her daughter, he should be punished. Ranjit Singh said that punishment would be meted out to him.

Murder

Munshi Devi Das stated two Afghans of Afghanistan, who sometime ago had killed Nihal Singh, a broker in Amritsar, and were in prison there, according to the order of the Noble Sarkar, had reached Lahore, having been sent by Desa Singh Majithia. He further stated that a brother of this Nihal Singh had also come from Amritsar seeking justice and compensation for the murder of his brother. The Noble Sarkar ordered these men to be made over to the Thanadar and the brother of the victim to be assured justice.

15 September, 1814: The Kotwal stated two Afghans took one grocer away from the city, seized a gold bracelet from his person, and then killed and buried him. The relatives of the grocer went after the two Afghans and murdered them.

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3 August, 1817: The Thanadar of Amritsar wrote that a gunman in the fort of Gobindgarh had killed another with a sword as the result of a dispute. What should he do in the matter. Ranjit Singh replied, 'Send the person to me.'

Steinbach says that in punishment for a murder, a girl of the culprit's family was given in marriage to a member of the deceased family, or 125 bighas of land or Rs. 150 to 200. But in general revenge was sought in *khoonbaha* or price of blood, meaning murdering a member of the culprit's family.

Ranjit Singh told the representatives of the hill rajas that a number of loaded camels had been plundered in their territories. They must write to their masters to procure the camels and the plundered goods.

Kashmir

The valley of Kashmir was freed from the attacks of Kakas, Bambas and Galwans. Robbery and thefts became unknown. "Life and property were safer as never before".[1] Under the Afghan rule cutting off the head of a Kashmiri, whether Hindu or Muslim, was like the plucking of a

*Rama Nand of Amritsar was Ranjit Singh's banker and treasurer.

[1]D.C. Sharma, op. cit., p. 277.

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flower. The following Persian proverb testifies it:

Sir buridan pesh-e-in sang dilan gulchidan ast.[1]

North-West Frontier

In 1832, the Darogha of a stud of horses was bringing some fine horses received in tribute from the Governor of Peshawar. He was escorted by 40 well-armed Sikh horsemen. Between Peshawar and Attock they were attacked by 3 to 4 hundred Yusafzais who carried off four horses. Between Attock and Rawalpindi they were again attacked by 4 to 5 hundred Gakhars in the Margali Pass and they took away two horses. Five Sikhs were killed in the fight.

June, 1832: The son of Atar Singh Rukhanwala with 40 horsemen was ordered to go across the Satluj and capture robbers of the dependency of Zira. He was given Rs. 200 to meet his expenses.

Prinsep writes that in case of highway robbery, the chief within whose jurisdiction the robbery had taken place was called upon to recover the stolen property. In case of failure the chief whose people had suffered could carry away hundreds of cattle in retaliation.

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Peshawar

Shahamat Ali writes: On the night between 13 and 14 March, 1839, a gang of dacoits entered the city of Peshawar and looted a wealthy Hindu merchant, killing one man of the merchant and severely wounding another. General Avitabile was the Governor. He blamed the merchant for not repairing the breach in the city wall through which the dacoits had entered. He prevented the deceased from being cremated until the merchant paid a fine of Rs. 2,000 which was to be spent on the fortification of the wall. It was in such a manner that justice was administered in Peshawar.

Some Nihangs or Akalis had gone to a water mill (*panchakki*) near Peshawar on 18 March, 1839, to get their corn ground. They were returning in the evening. Some Pathans lay in ambush on the road. They attacked the Akalis. One of them was killed, two or three were wounded. The rest throwing away the flour had a narrow escape.

During General Avitabile's governorship, wrote Shahamat Ali, a thief was "almost certain of being hanged".

Shahamat Ali noted in April, 1839: "Both in approaching and leaving

[1]Ibid.

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the city we observed a row of four or five gibbets on a height to the right, with corpses hanging from them." Some five or six criminals could be hung on a gibbet at a time. After being executed the corpses were left on the gibbets until they were either ransomed or dropped to pieces. They were generally suspended by the feet. The Afghans were such bloodthirsty savages that without such steps, in the words of Shahamat Ali, "there would be safety neither for life nor property."

Delay–23 December, 1838: It was reported that Jiwand Singh Mokal had delayed in executing Sarkar's orders. The Sarkar ordered his jagir to be confiscated.

Comment

During the forty years' rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh only a few cases of theft, robbery and murder have come to our notice. It appears certain that the Maharaja had succeeded in eliminating almost completely lawlessness from his kingdom.

Baron Charles Hugel in 1836 wrote:

> Anything like a robbery is most improbable, for I have before remarked that, in this respect, the Panjab is much safer than Hindustan, the Maharaja calling every village near which the robbery takes place, to a very strict account, and making the inhabitants pay the value of things stolen to the loser.

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Ranjit Singh adopted a simple procedure, short and swift. In 1805 Sir John Malcolm accompanied Lord Lake upto the banks of river Beas. He was told by a Sikh who carried on trade in Bengal that the judicial system of Ranjit Singh was far better than that of the English, which was tedious, expensive and vexatious, and advantageous to clever rogues. Malcolm himself held the view that the Sikh system was "most congenial to the temper of the people".

The Maharaja was easily accessible to the common people. He had placed a box near his palace where any person could put in an application to seek justice. He had the power of pardon. Hugel says: "The people seem contented with the justice dealt out to them".

Ranjit Singh's personal influence and his prompt action against corrupt and erring officials, resulting in fines, imprisonment, dismissal and confiscation of property both movable and immovable led to fair judgments.

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CHAPTER 23

The New Model Army

Ranjit Singh made the Sikh army a model in Asia,
Handsome, stalwarts as if they belonged to Caucasia;
With the great Maharaja their record was fine,
Like the Germans under Bismarck across the Rhine.

General Qualifications of a Soldier

A soldier anywhere in the world is expected to possess the following three qualifications of body, mind and soul:

1. A military appearance and bearing, implying that he must be neat, smart and impressive.

2. Certain qualities of mind such as coolness, courage, determination, endurance, discipline, and aversion of desertion under heavy onslaughts of the enemy.

3. Some traits of character like loyalty, restraint over temptation to plunder, sexual indulgence, and tendency to commit unnecessary slaughter of men, and destination of property.

The Sukarchakia Troops

Ranjit Singh had inherited a respectable military force. James Brown estimated the military strength of Ranjit Singh's father Mahan Singh in 1787 at 15,000 horse and 5,000 foot in the Rachna Doab, and about 5,000 horse and foot in the Chaj and Sind Sagar Doabs. Imam-ud-din Husaini in 1796 put it at about 22,000 horse and foot in command of Ranjit Singh as head of the Sukarchakia Misl.

Why Ranjit Singh wanted a Strong Army

There were several reasons for it.

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1. One was the close proximity of the British on his eastern border. He was fully aware of their might and their secret intentions.

2. There was a perpetual fear of Afghan invasions from the north-west.

3. There were many Sikh and Muslim chiefs who were determined to expel him from Lahore. Ranjit Singh had recently escaped from the armed action of the Cabal at Bhasin.

4. Since Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739, the Panjab was in a state of turmoil, chaos and confusion. Bandits, brigands and robbers abounded everywhere. They were to be suppressed.

5. There was no police system anywhere in the world in the beginning of the nineteenth century and the army preserved day to day peace and tranquillity.

6. Revenues and tributes due to Government could be realized from refractory people with the help of the army only.

When did he Start Building up His New Model Army

Professor Sita Ram Kohli says that the exact date when Ranjit Singh commenced forming his new model army cannot be determined for want of documentary evidence. Most of the writers have traced it to Akali conflict with the contingent of Charles Metcalfe in 1809 at Amritsar. Some attribute it to Jaswant Rao Holkar's visit to Amritsar in 1805. Others allude it to Ranjit Singh's incognito visit to Lord Lake's camp on the Beas in 1805. No doubt all these factors did stregnthen Ranjit Singh's determination.

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However it seems probable that Ranjit Singh got the idea of forming a new model army even before his occupation of Lahore in July, 1799. In November, 1798, George Thomas, an Irish adventurer, ruler of Western Haryana, with his capital at Hansi, invaded Jind, 40 km distant. Ranjit Singh's mother was a Jind princess. Her younger brother Bhag Singh was the Raja of Jind from 1786 to 1819. George Thomas commanded one thousand horse, eight infantry battalions and fifty guns. Ranjit Singh was then busy in opposing Shah Zaman who had invaded Panjab for the fourth time, and could not go to Jind to help his relative. George Thomas frequently fought against the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs and defeated their combined forces. Delhi was under Daulat Rao Sindhia. It was managed by his French General Perron. With Perron's help the Sikhs expelled George Thomas from Haryana in 1800. In 1803, the British General, Lord Lake, defeated Perron and seized Delhi.

In 1800 Yusaf Ali, a British envoy, arrived at Lahore. At the same time an agent of Daulat Rao Sindhia came to Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja's

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main interest in life pertained to military matters. By searching inquiries from both as well as from Raja Bhag Singh he came to know the importance of Infantry and of Artillery and of European drill and discipline.

The new European system of fighting had been introduced in India by Tipu Sultan and Marathas. Ranjit Singh resolved to follow their example.

Changes introduced by Ranjit Singh

1. Under the misls only Sikhs were recruited in the army on voluntary basis. Ranjit Singh maintained the voluntary system, but the recruitment was thrown open to young men of all castes, classes, creeds, colour, religion and Panjabis or non-Panjabis.

2. Instead of guerilla mode of warfare steady fire from guns and muskets was considered of greater importance for victory.

3. In place of irregular unpaid forces of the misls, a regular standing army paid by the State on monthly basis was organised.

Military Department

In 1809 Bhawani Das introduced a separate Military Department to maintain its records. It was called *Daftar-e-Fauj*. It consisted of three sections:

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(a) *Baraward Taqsim Talab* or the pay rolls.

(b) *Jama kharch* or the papers relating to the credit and debit accounts of the Army.

(c) *Chihra* or the descriptive rolls of military men. The descriptive rolls contained name of the man, his father's name, his grandfather's name, his native place, his caste, various details of his personal appearance such as height, thickness of body and marks of identification. In the case of sowar, a brief description of his horse was also noted, date of appointment, starting pay and later variations, dates of transfer, removal by death, desertion or dismissal.

When a trooper was enlisted, his horse received a brand or *dagh* for which the government charged a fee of Rs. 5.

Each section was divided into two parts. One dealt with *Fauj-e-Ain* or regular army, which was organised on European model. The other pertained to irregular cavalry.

Formerly each branch received salary separately through their commanding officers. After 1822 disbursement was made collectively through the Diwan or treasurer attached to each division.

Four registers were maintained:

(a) *Roznamcha Taqsim*: It was a day book, containing each item of

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payment in the order it was made.

(b) *Roznamcha Kasrat*: This register kept a record of various deductions made from the pay of a soldier. They included deductions for *wardi* or military uniform, fines for absence from duty and breach of discipline, etc.

(c) *Roznamcha Amanat*: It kept account of salaries which had not been paid or were withheld for future payment.

(d) *Wasil Baqi Taqsim*: It contained aggregates of receipts, of disbursement and of balances of individual units.

The undisbursed salaries of *fauti* (dead) and *bakar amdah* or those killed in action, were made over to the deceased's *bradar-e-haqiqi* or real brother, *pisar* (son), *ahalya* (wife), *Madar-pidar* (parents) less the charges of cremation or burial (*kafan dafan*).

Infantry

Before Ranjit Singh the Sikh army mainly consisted of cavalry. Infantry was held in low esteem. It was maintained to guard the forts, to look after Sardar's household, and to serve men in cavalry and artillery. The Sikh sardars had some artillery, but it was not properly kept.

On the break-up of George Thomas's army in the spring of 1800 Ranjit Singh tempted a few infantrymen who were *Purabias* of Uttar Pradesh called *Bhayyas* or Hindustanis. There were also Muslims such as Pathans, Sayyids, Rajputs and Shaikhs of Uttar Pradesh. They had received training in drill and discipline. Ranjit Singh recruited men from the army of French General Perron who had been defeated in 1803 by Lord Lake. He also lured a number of soldiers to give up British service on the temptation of higher pay from Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per mensem, and exemption from service in foreign lands which was a compulsory feature in the British army services.

Diwan Amar Nath writes that some Hindustani sepoys, deserters from Company's army, came to get jobs under Ranjit Singh. They were immediately employed.

Dhaunkal Singh

Among new recruits there came a man named Dhaunkal Singh. He assured the Maharaja that he knew the *bayonet* exercise. He was immediately employed to make a beginning with about 30 young men. The Sikhs resented it as a monkey *tamasha* or fun. Ranjit was not the man to be turned away from his purpose. He won them over by his favours. He sent for them in the morning. He witnessed their parade, and then fed them

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from his own mess, and while departing offered them *bakhshish* or presents. He gave them sweets, clothes, and for the best performance in drill he presented them gold bangles, golden butkis, and cash prizes ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 500. This generosity attracted others. As a result a large number of young men came forward to join infantry and artillery. In the infantry Ranjit Singh recruited young men who were tall, not below 5′-8′′, of fair colour, attractive features, thin, with full beards, between the age of 17 and 24, hardy, caring neither for appetite nor fatigue. They were carefully selected from large bodies of candidates for service. For example, on 26 August, 1815, at Lahore, 100 young men came from Majha in search of employment. Ranjit Singh selected only 25 out of them for infantry. The rest were absorbed in other branches. The army service was so popular that its strength could be raised to any extent in an emergency.

Osborne in 1838 found the Sikh soldiers "very manly looking men, with great length of limb, and broad open chests", and "a merry, light-hearted race of poeple".

The Cap Affair

Ranjit Singh wished to have a common *headgear* for his infantry. He ordered a sepoy cap to be used instead of a *turban*. The idea was to give his men a smart outlook. The Sikh soldiers refused it and mutinied. The Maharaja yielded. He then ordered the Gorkhas to wear it. Their number was about 1,200. They also declined. Ranjit Singh hit upon a plan. He told his Sikh soldiers that he would not force the use of cap upon them; but they should help him in compelling the Gorkhas to use it. He suggested when they would come for their pay, the Sikh troops should surround them and force them to agree to the cap. The Gorkhas came to know of this conspiracy.

The Maharaja had pitched his camp in the open plain of Gobindgarh fort at Amritsar. The Gorkhas came to receive their pay with loaded muskets. On getting their pay they were returning, when three battalions of the Sikhs marched towards them. The Gorkhas said: "Let us pass or we fire, we are loaded". The Sikhs embraced them and said: "We will not wear the cap, nor will you". Ranjit Singh took no notice of it. He instructed Dhaunkal Singh to wear the cap himself, and recruit only such men as had no objection to use the cap. Only Hindus and Muslims came forward to wear the cap.

Dhaunkal Singh was promoted as Colonel and his "descendants possessed a good property all over the country".

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The Growth

G.L. Chopra says that the British Resident at Delhi on 19 September, 1807, wrote to the Secretary to the Governor-General that "Ranjit's army at that time numbered 25,000 horse (of which 12,000 were trained) and 7,000 foot."

Professor Sita Ram Kohli says that in 1807, Ranjit Singh had "at least three infantry battalions in his army. In 1808-9 Metcalfe saw five infantry battalions in the service of the Maharaja."

Organisation

At first an infantry battalion had two-horse-guns under a *kumedan* or commandant. Later on infantry brigades were formed. A brigade contained 4 battalions of infantry, one battery of 8 to 10 horse-guns, and a cavalry regiment with a company of Sappers and Miners.

One infantry battalion consisted of about 900 men under a *kumedan* or commandant assisted by an Adjutant and a Major, a number of clerks, *mutsaddis* or accountants, and a *granthi* or religious preacher.

Each battalion consisted of 8 companies, each of about 100 men, under a Subedar. A company was divided into 4 sections of about 25 men under a Havaldar who had one Naik to assist him.

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The costume of the Regular infantry was scarlet with different coloured designs to make distinction between different regiments. Their trousers were of blue linen. The head dress was a blue turban with one end hanging loose which was spread over the back of the sodiers and both shoulders. The belts were of black leather. Their arms were a musket and bayonet manufactured at Lahore. The drum, fife and bugle were in general use in the Sikh infantry regiments. Their flag was of saffron colour. Their war cry was 'Sat Sri Akal'.

Discipline

Strict discipline was introduced in the army by Ventura and Allard who joined Ranjit Singh's service in 1822. Insubordination was punished with loss of pay, or extra duty or confinement or even dismissal.

Endurance

The infantry men were so hardy that they could endure fatigue of long marches for several days in succession. On an average they could cover 60 km daily. In late twenties Captain Wade was struck by the "cheerful alacrity with which the Sikhs seemed to endure the fatigue."

Burton, a traveller, who visited Panjab in 1831, wrote:

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> They are thin men with good features; they are capable of bearing the fatigue of long marches for several days in succession, so that it has become a by-word that the Punjabis have iron legs. On their marches they encamp very regularly, and I saw 30,000 men, the army of Peshawar, moving with as much facility as a single regiment on this side of the Sutlej. No wheeled carriage is allowed, and their own bazars contain all they require.

The distance between Lahore and Peshawar by the Grand Trunk Road is 460 km. There were four big rivers without bridges to be crossed either on horseback or in boats. There were no cantonments on the way for rest. They put up in small tents called *chholdari*, or in "ruined Mohmedan mosques or caravan serais". The oppressive heat, or torrential rains, or extreme cold, no good food except some parched gram did not worry them in the least. They considered these things as a matter of course.

Prince Nau Nihal Singh and Raja Gulab Singh, at the head of 2,000 troops, both horse and foot, and 12 cannon, reached Lahore from Peshawar on the evening of the fifth day in September, 1840. Alexander Gardner followed them with 900 infantry and reached Lahore on the seventh day in the morning.

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Fast Runners

A particular Sikh often travelled on foot from Lahore to Peshawar, 465 km, in five days. Alexander Gardner had a Sikh in his corps of artillery who repeatedly went on foot from Lahore to Jammu and brought back despatches in less than 3 days. The distance between Lahore and Jammu by the straight road is 150 km. Gardner says that there were "several Sikh soldiers (called *chalikoha*) who would, even for a small consideration, go 40 cos, or 60 miles (100 km) daily, for 12 or 15 days together". Steinbach's infantrymen could live on a small quantity of food, and could cover "marches that none but the Turkoman Tartars can perform". The Sikh soldiers were therefore called iron-legged. Baron Charles Hugel noted that a sowar on a dromedary travelled from Lahore to Rawalpindi, 290 km in three days.

In 1838, a year before the Maharaja's death the infantry numbered 26,000. The Maharaja encouraged sport by every means in his power, and spent money lavishly.

Fauj-e-Qilajat

The infantry men garrisoned forts like Peshawar, Attock, Rohtas,

Multan, Kangra and Phillaur. They numbered 10,800. Garrison infantry got Rs. 6 and Jamadar Rs.12 per mensem.

Every fort was under a Thanadar. All the persons in a fort had to follow a certain code of conduct:

(1) No wine. (2) No dancing girl inside the fort. (3) No borrowing from a bazar shopkeeper. (4) No quarrel with civil population. (5) Must send half salary home. The salary of garrisons was paid by the *qiladar* who was authorised to get the amounts from the neighbouring Kardars or collectors.

Gorkhas

Ranjit Singh came into contact with Gorkhas at Kangra in 1808-9. He was deeply impressed with their courage, valour and spirit of fighting. He had started recruiting them at the commencement of the century, and had succeeded in forming one or two regiments of Gorkhas.

In 1815 he spent his summer at Dinanagar and raised a new Battalion of Gorkhas. At the end of the Gorkha War in 1816, Ranjit Singh recruited a large number of Gorkhas.

Court, a Frenchman, trained at Ecole Polytechnique of Paris, was given command of two battalions of Gorkhas.

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Arjan Singh was a son of the celebratad Gorkha General Amar Singh Thapa who had conquered the Shivalik hills in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Arjan Singh was recruited as Captain in the Gorkha regiment. He retired in 1838, and went back to Nepal.

Bhupal Singh was another son of General Amar Singh Thapa. He was appointed Captain in a battalion of the French Legion under General Ventura. It was through him that Maharaja Ranjit Singh recruited Gorkha soldiers. The secret correspondence between Kathmandu and Lahore passed through him.

Artillery

The Sikh sardars before Ranjit Singh did not favour heavy guns on account of their immobility with their cavalry. Occasionally they carried small guns called *zamburaks*.

Francklin in his *Memoirs of George Thomas* says that the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs in 1800 possessed about forty field guns. Two eyewitnesses, Ghulam Sarwar in 1793 and Imam-ud-din Husaini in 1796 wrote that Ranjit Singh had inherited a *Topkhana* consisting of 1,000 Afghan infantry with six guns under the command of Ghaus Khan.

In 1807 he obtained Kare Khan gun from Patiala. Raja Sahib Singh of

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Patiala offered Ranjit Singh Rs. 20,000 for the gun. Ranjit Singh did not agree.

The Marathas had a well organized artillery branch in their armies. It was managed by Pathans. In the Third Battle of Panipat in 1760-61, the head of the Peshwa's artillery was Ibrahim Khan Gardi, commanding seven battalions. He most loyally served his masters against his clan brother Ahmad Shah Durrani. After the defeat of the Marathas Ibrahim Khan fell into the hands of the Durrani monarch, who most cruelly tortured him to death. In the Second Maratha War, the Marathas had been vanquished by the British in 1803. The Muslim Daroghas of artillery were thrown out of employment. They came to the Panjab and were taken in service by Ranjit Singh. A few cannon were placed in Ghaus Khan's charge. He trained gunners, and organized the artillery branch. In 1810 horse artillery was formed and the regular department of *Topkhana Khas* was raised by him. In June, 1813, he was present in the battle of Haidru near Attock. In that battle Diwan Mohkam Chand was pitched against the Kabul Wazir Fatah Khan and his brother Dost Muhammad Khan. Remembering the fate of Ibrahim Khan in 1761, he remained neutral in the battle. Diwan Mohkam Chand won. Ranjit Singh took no action against Ghaus Khan; but he criticized him in an open durbar in his absence. This treachery told heavily on his mind and he died a slow death in 1814. Ranjit Singh gave charge of Ghaus Khan's battery to his son Sultan Muhammad Khan.

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In 1814 Ilahi Bakhsh was taken in service. He raised the Elephant Battery section. Missar Diwan Chand, a clerk in the Artillery Department, was made Darogha or head. In the beginning the artillery was a mixed affair. It was called *Topkhana Jinsi* or mixed batteries, having guns driven by horses, bullocks and camels. In 1814 the artillery was divided into four classes:

1. *Topkhana Fili* or Elephant Batteries.
2. *Topkhana Shutri* or Camel Swivels or Zamburaks.
3. *Topkhana Aspi* or Horse Batteries.
4. *Topkhana Gavi* or Bullock Batteries.

Diwan Chand remained the head until his death in 1825. His son Sukh Dayal was appointed in his father's place. After two years he was demoted for incompetency. Sultan Muhammad Khan succeeded him. Court joined in 1827, and Alexander Gardner in 1831. Both of them improved the working of the Artillery Department. In 1832 Sultan Muhammad Khan

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was promoted as General. In 1837 he was demoted for excessive drinking. Lahna Singh Majithia became the head of the artillery; but he remained busy in casting big guns in the foundry located inside Lahore Fort. The smaller guns were cast at Kotli Loharan in Sialkot district. In 1837 Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief, was at Lahore to attend the marriage of Prince Nau Nihal Singh. He presented to the Maharaja a gun manufactured in England. In 1839 he again visited Lahore with Lord Auckland. Ranjit Singh took the General to the store where guns were kept on stands. On entering the gate he was taken aback at the sight of a large number of guns quite similar to that presented by him in 1837. Ranjit Singh asked him to recognise his own gun. He walked examining each cannon and pointed out the one made in England by reading the inscription on it.

The other notable officers in the artillery were Qadir Bakhsh and Mir Mazhar Ali. Mian Qadir Bakhsh was sent to Ludhiana to get training in gunnery. Later on he wrote a book on this subject. Lahna Singh Majithia was the most remarkable man at the Court of Lahore. He was a quiet worker, a great mechanic and inventor. He cast fine guns. He invented a clock showing hour, day and month. He was a keen student of astronomy. When his son Dayal Singh Majithia was born, he cast his son's horoscope and predicted that with him his dynasty would come to an end, but his name would live for ever. Ranjit Singh had conferred on him the title of *Husam-ud-Daulah* or Sword of the State. Griffin is full of praise for him, which he indeed richly deserved.

At the firing of shell, shot, canister, etc. all received presents from the Maharaja according to the their efficiency and merit. The presents ranged from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000, and were paid half in gold and silver, and half in pashmina shawls, etc. Dhian Singh took very great interest in building the Maharaja's artillery which according to Osborne was "by far the best and most powerful arm of the Sikh nation". Osborne further added that it could compare very favourably "to any artillery in the world".

In June, 1838, at Lahore, Osborne saw that the grape from a gun hit the mark 200 yards distant, then at a distance of 800 yards and 1,200 yards. He remarked that it was "creditable to any artillery in the world". Ranjit Singh and Dhian Singh were with Osborne. Dhian Singh said to the Maharaja: "I wish Dost Muhammad should have been present as a witness to this proficiency". Osborne suggested to the Maharaja that the cavalry protecting the cannon should be on the flanks and not in the rear.

A shot was formed of beaten iron and each cost one rupee. The shells were generally composed of pewter. Each gun had a name as *Fatah Jang*

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(Victorious in War). Some of them bore inscriptions either in Persian or in Gurmukhi "Sri Akal Sahae".

Dress in Artillery

The dress in artillery consisted of a turban, black waistband, cross belts, ornamented brass scabbard, high boots and white trousers. Orders were given in French. The average strength in a 10-gun battery was 250 men including non-combatants, under a commandant, assisted by an Adjutant and a Major. Each section was under a Jamadar with a Havaldar and a Naik to assist him.

The number of guns in a mixed battery varied from 10 to 25. In a horse battery the number varied from 6 to 10. In a swivel battery the number was fixed at 60. Each battery was divided into guns, and one gun formed a unit. One gun had 11 gunners.

Pay

The regular army was paid in cash generally. In some cases officers were given revenue free jagirs. Grades differed in different regiments.

Salaries

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Kumedan	Rs. 60 to Rs. 150 a month
Adjutant	Rs. 30 to Rs. 60 a month
Mahzur or Major	Rs. 21 to Rs. 25 a month
Subedar	Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 a month
Havaldar	Rs. 13 to Rs. 15 a month
Sarjant	Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 a month
Phuriya	Rs. 4.50 to Rs. 10 a month
Sepoy	Rs. 7 to Rs. 8.50 a month

In the artillery the scales of pay were the same as in infantry. In the cavalry it was much higher. A Sowar was paid from Rs. 20 to 26 a month. A Risaldar Rs. 40 to 48.

(*Note*: These rates existed during Ranjit Singh's time.)

Year	*Strength*	*Monthly expenditure*	*Average per head*
1811	4,061	Rs. 32,173	7.8
1819	9,457	Rs. 79,494	8.4
1828	23,948	Rs. 2,48,644	10.3
1838	38,301	Rs. 3,74,101	12.4

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Ranjit Singh's artillery consisted of 376 guns and 370 swivels (camel artillery). Every cavalry corps and every infantry battalion had a number of guns. Besides there was a separate department of artillery under a Darogha.

In 1839 the number of guns in *Jinsi* battery varied from 10 to 30, in horse battery from 5 to 10, and in camel battery from 50 to 75. In the *Topkhana Khas* there were 176 cannon.

Elephants

Baron Charles Hugel says the Maharaja had 101 elephants. The biggest of enormous size was named Sardarji. He was presented to the Maharaja by the King of Nepal. He was ornamented with a splendid guilt howdah and crimson velvet cushions. Red velvet trappings fell as low as his knees, trimmed with a gold border and fringe. The long tusks were cut at the end, as is the case with all tame elephants, but this deficiency was supplied by tops of silver gilt, united by a golden chain. Round his ankles were heavy gold bangles, such as Hindus wear. The animal was quite black. The price of this elephant's ornaments was Rs. 13,000. The other elephants were also gaily dressed and adorned with jewels, silks and shawls.

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Cavalry

The cavalry was divided into two class, *Fauj-e-baquaid* and *Fauj-e-bequaid*, or *Ghorcharha Khas* and *Ghorcharha Sowars,* or Regular cavalry and Irregular cavalry.

Regular Cavalry

The Regular cavalry was paid in cash and had state horses. It was very inferior to the Infantry. In the cavalry there were "men of all ages, ill-looking, ill-dressed and worse mounted". (Osborne). Men in the Regular cavalry were appointed from the followers of different sardars subdued by the Maharaja. They were selected for faithful service without any consideration for their fitness and capacity for fighting. They could ride well, but could not fight bravely. Steinbach calls them a body of "mean-looking" men. Griffin says old men were fit only for hospitals. Their horses were small, ill-bred and lean. They were subjected to vigorous drill and discipline. According to Professor Sita Ram Kohli their number in 1811 was 1,209, and in 1838 it was 4,090.

The Regular cavalryman wore a helmet, with a shawl or a scarf of crimson coloured silk wrapped round it, a suppressed red coloured

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jacket, trousers of silk of dark blue colour with a red stripe, two belts of black leather, one supporting a pouch of bullets and the other bayonet, and a *kamarband* round his waist. His carbine was on his back resting in a bucket tied to the saddle. His slippers embroidered in gold covered his naked feet.

The officers were dressed in silk all over and had only a sabre. It was these soldiers whom Jacquemont called "The most lazy, good-for-nothing rascals on earth". This cavalry was under the Maharaja's own command.

The Ghorcharha Sowars

The *Ghorcharha Sowars* or *Fauj-e-bequaid* were further sub-divided into three classes. The *Ghorcharhas* who were paid by the State, but who provided themselves with their own horses and arms. Professor Kohli counted the strength of the *Ghorcharha Khas* at 10,795 and expenditure at Rs. 31,68,714, and cost to the state treasury per head Rs. 293.5. The others were Jagirdari contingents and Akalis.

The Irregular army was not given any training in European methods of discipline. It was not divided into regiments. It consisted of *derahs* after the name of a particular Sardar. Each *derah* had its own commander and a *granthi* or reader of the Holy *Granth*. It consisted of a number of groups containing from 50 to 70 men. A group had men of the same caste and from the same region. There were Sikh Jats of Majha and Doaba, Hindu Rajputs of Kangra hills, Dogra Rajputs of Jammu, Muslim Rajputs of Jehlam, Hindu Khatris of Gujrat and Sialkot, Mohyal Datta Brahmans of Rawalpinid-Murree-Kohala area, and Pathans from Attock and its neighbourhood. They were the sons and relatives of wealthy country gentlemen of upper classes. They joined army not to earn their livelihood but for the sake of adventure and social prestige as military service was looked upon with great respect.

They had their own horses and arms. Their dignified bearing, dressed in tunics, of cotton, silk or broad cloth and shawls of variegated colours, beautiful turbans with *kalgi* of haron's plume, or helmets inlaid with gold, gold-embroidered belts and shoes, a small round shield on back, their dazzling armour, breast plates or coats of mail, riding on a fine steed, and the long lance in their hand, producing a hissing sound in the air at a gallop, won the admiration of everybody, and transported beautiful young maidens into a dreamland.

Ranjit Singh's early conquests of Kangra hills and Jammu, Multan and Kashmir were made by these troops. When the Regular cavalry had failed in a campaign, the reckless dash of these irregulars turned the tables in

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favour of the Maharaja. Moorcroft observed: "By their desperate courage the Ghorcharahs had earned for themselves a name and for Ranjit Singh a kingdom".

Each trooper was granted land worth Rs. 300 to Rs. 400 a year. In case of payment in cash he received about Rs. 300 a year. He had to maintain himself, his steed, his arms and dress on this amount. For illustration a very brief account of one *derah* of Irregular cavalry is given below.

Charyari Derah

Sardar Bhup Singh Sidhu, Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia, Ram Singh Sadozai and Hardas Singh Banya were four fast friends. They were all young men of about the same age, very handsome, well-built and were always finely dressed. They were ever smiling and leading a happy-go-lucky life. They lived together and seldom separated. Ranjit Singh was enamoured of beauty in all walks of life. They were employed as soldiers in his personal service. The Maharaja was so highly pleased with their noble bearing that he created a *derah* under the name of *Charyari Sowars*, and gave them fine horses to ride on. The number of their companions began to grow daily under the patronage of the Maharaja. Raja Suchet Singh, one of the Dogra brothers, was the handsomest man at the court of Ranjit Singh, and he was given command of *Charyari Derah*.

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The Jagirdari Troops

Every jagirdar was required to maintain permanently efficient and well-equipped horsemen for service on demand in the Maharaja's army. Their number was fixed according to the value of the jagir. They were frequently needed for conquest, to suppress rebellion, or to restore order at a particular place or to realize revenues from refractory chiefs and defaulters. The Maharaja was very particular about their proper number and equipment. The Dasahra day was fixed for their annual inspection. He also scrutinised them when on tours. Once Hari Singh Nalwa was fined two lakhs of rupees for keeping a smaller number of men.

The Jagirdari army consisted of: Irregular horsemen 6,460, Regular infantry, 9 regiments, Regular cavalry, 5 regiments, horse and bullock artillery 87 pieces.

The composition of the Jagirdari army was as follows:

1. Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh–3 regiments of infantry and 2 regiments of cavalry.
2. Jammu Rajas–4 regiments of infantry and one regiment of cavalry.
3. Lahna Singh Majithia–One battalion of infantry.

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4. Jamadar Khushhal Singh–One regiment of infantry.
5. The Sandhanwalia Sardars–2 regiments of cavalry.
(*Note:* The troops posted in forts and police force were not included in the above figures.)

Akalis

The Akalis were in control of Hari Mandar or Durbar Sahib at Amritsar. In the eyes of the Sikhs they possessed a semi-sacred character. They hated Europeans and Pathans, and even Ranjit Singh because he treated the foreigners with great consideration. On a number of occasions he narrowly escaped assassination by them.

They were generally armed with naked swords, one in each hand, two in the belts, a matchlock at the back, and two pairs of quoits round their turbans, dressed in black, carrying black standards with a lion embroidered on them, they dashed about fearlessly.

The Maharaja did not interfere with them. He organised them into four regiments called Changari. They were employed on most dangerous occasions. Their number was 3 to 4 thousand. They fought most desperately at Multan, in Hazara and Peshawar. They were an excellent match for the Ghazis of Islam. The most fierce and terrible attacks of the "wild children of Islam" were met with equal ferocity and savagery by Akalis. The Akalis drew their inspiration from Holy *Granth* and Guru Gobind Singh.

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Fauj-e-Khas or Special or Model Brigade or Francese Camp, or French Division

This force was trained on European model by Ventura, Allard, Court and Avitabile. It consisted of:

4 battalions of Regular infantry	3,176 men
2 regiments of Regular cavalry	1,667 men
One troop of artillery with 34 cannon	855 men
Total	5, 698 men

The infantry force included:

Special battalion	820 men
A Gorkha battalion	707 men
Deva Singh's battalion	839 men
Sham Sota's battalion	810 men

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The cavalry force included:

A granadier regiment	730 men
A dragoon regiment	750 men
A troop of lifeguards	187 men

The artillery corps was named after its commander as Ilahi Bakhsh Corps. Ilahi Bakhsh was considered "the best artillery officer in the Sikh army". The pay of the whole brigade was Rs. 96,067.

The emblem of *Fauj-e-Khas* was eagle, and a tricoloured flag bearing inscription 'Deg, Teg, Fatah'.

Fauj-e-Ain

The *Fauj-e-Ain* or Regular army consisted of infantry, artillery and the regiments of dragoons and lancers. All of them were trained on the Western model. Professor Sita Ram Kohli says that in the Khalsa Durbar records its number in 1838 was 38,242:

Infantry	29,617
Cavalry	4,090
Artillery	4,535
Total	38,242

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Salary

Rank	*Starting salary per mensem*	*Maximum salary*
General	Rs. 400	Rs. 460
Colonel	Rs. 300	Rs. 350
Subedar	Rs. 20	Rs. 30
Jamadar	Rs. 15	Rs. 22
Havaldar	Rs. 13	Rs. 15
Naik	Rs. 10	Rs. 12

Ventura and Allard were given initial salary of Rs. 2,500 per mensem in 1822. Avitabile and Court received Rs.1,666 in 1827 at the start. Harlan got Rs. 1,000, Martin Rs. 900, Dr. Benet Rs. 1,000, and Steinbach Rs. 700.

General Features

1. Increment and promotion in rank depended on merit, conspicuous service, on minister's recommendation, and the Maharaja's pleasure.

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2. Recruitment could be made even at the age of 15, and one could continue upto 65.

3. Arms and guns were manufactured under supervision of Lahna Singh Majithia. He invented Surajmukhi gun. Hugel expressed great appreciation for it. In these workshops a skilled worker was paid Rs. 2 daily and unskilled worker Re. 1 and 13 paise.

4. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a telescope, and viewed the movements of his own troops as well as of the enemy. In 1827 he observed: "Of all the means of intelligence (*harkaras*) a telescope is the most faithful and correct".

5. Seven foundries are known to have existed at the following places:

(i) Lahore Fort under Lahna Singh Majithia
(ii) Lahore Fort under Mian Qadir Bakhsh
(iii) Idgah, Lahore, under Mian Afzal Ali
(iv) Lahore Cantonment under General Court
(v) Shahdara under Jawahar Mal
(vi) Nakodar under Khalifa Imam-ud-din
(vii) Shaikhupura

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Horses

Baron Charles Hugel writes that the Maharaja had 1,000 horses for his own use, 15,000 for his Model Brigade, 27,000 for his cavalry and 27,000 for his infantry. The horses were small and ill-shaped. The Panjab breed of horses was not good. The Sikhs did not import stock from other countries to improve their own breed. Dhani and Gheb breed of horses and mules was famous in the whole of India. "Their horse trappings were of leather of inferior quality. Their saddles were of same material, and were badly made.

Defects

1. There were some defects in Ranjit Singh's army. As the entire structure of Sikhism was based on principles of democracy, the democratic spirit prevailed in the army too. For all practical purposes it was a self-governing body. Its internal affairs were conducted by the Panchayat of each company. The Panchayat was a representative body of the soldiers elected by them by a unanimous vote. The Sikh army never completely submitted to civil authorities.

2. The soldiers were not regularly and punctually paid and their dues remained from twelve to twenty-four months in arrears. This created the spirit of discontentment and indiscipline.

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3. The Maharaja's strong personality did not allow any mutiny or even complaints. But once at Amritsar a Gorkha regiment lost patience for the payment of arrears had tried to keep him surrounded, but he managed to take refuge in the Gobindgarh fort. Osborne wrote in 1838:

I asked the Maharaja when they had been last paid. "Eighteen months ago, and yet they were discontented". I told him that in our service men were regularly paid. He replied, "So are mine, and more than that, the rascals have been living on plunder for the last six months".

Osborne recorded that the Sikhs were "the finest material in the world for forming an army". But at that time for want of regular payment it was "utterly useless and insufficient".

4. Ranjit Singh paid his army in four ways:

(a) Assignment of land or a jagir.

(b) In grain at harvest time twice a year or *faslanadar*.

(c) Payment in cash at a fixed monthly rate, through Kardar, who gave an assignment on some zamindar.

(d) Monthly cash payment was introduced when deserters from British army joined the Sikh service. They were accustomed to receive payment in cash in the first week of every month. In due course of time Ranjit Singh adopted the cash system.

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The Maharaja was going for an outing on 2 January, 1839. On the way the *Sowars* of the *derah* of Prince Kharak Singh complained that their salaries had not been paid for full one year. Bhayya Mahtab was ordered to go to the Kanwar along with the *Sowars* to clear their dues.

5. On 9 January, 1839, it was reported that 20 *Sowars* out of 100 had gone home without permission. The Sarkar ordered that the jagirs of 20 persons should be confiscated and others should be appointed in their places.

6. No pensions were paid even for a long period of service. A relation of a retiring man or who died in battle or was seriously wounded was given service. About one-third of the posts in the army were filled by such people.

7. There was no provision for helping widows and orphans of soldiers killed in battles.

8. Promotions in salary, grades or ranks did not depend on seniority or even on merit. They depended on the sweet will of the Maharaja or on the recommendations of his ministers.

9. Under misls only Sikhs were recruited in the Sikh army. This homogeneity was responsible for uniform successes of the Sikhs. Maharaja Ranjit Singh recruited men from all castes, creeds and religions. The time

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was not ripe for such a policy. His army therefore contained the germs of inherent weakness.

10. Osborne says, "The commanding officer abuses and beats the Major, the Major the Captains, the Captains the subalterns, and so on till there is nothing left for the private to beat but the drummer boys, who catch it accordingly".

11. Under Indian officers, writes Steinbach, the Sikh soldiers became "arrogant and insubordinate", but under European officers, they generally behaved well.

Burton wrote, "On parade they give utterance to abusive expression, striking freely any of a rank inferior to their own. The commandant canes the Adjutant, who in turn strikes the officers at the heads of companies, who again vent their ill humour on the non-commissioned and privates".

12. They possessed propensity for plunder, and immediately on winning victory they indulged in plundering the enemy's dead and wounded. In this state when attacked by the enemy their victory resulted in defeat. This took place in the battle of Jamrud in 1837, when Hari Singh Nalwa was killed.

March, 1835, Maharaja Ranjit Singh remarked that Englishmen were excellent. If an enemy might throw sovereigns in front of them in the very thick of the battle, their soldiers would not cast even a glance at them. On the other hand if the Khalsa troops saw a little grain, they broke off from the line and rushed to seize it, and spoiled the whole game of war. The Maharaja enquired of Captain Wade the reason for this. Wade replied there would be no temptation in case monthly salaries of the troops were regularly and punctually disbursed.

13. In British army everything acquired by troops in the battlefield and afterwards belonged to the Government. Before entering the barracks every soldier was thoroughly searched. One English soldier admitted that he had managed to retain a gold bar in the loot of Kaithal by tying it to his leg inside his pantaloon.[1]

14. At village Chahardeh beyond Khaibar Pass on the road to Kabul, Shahamat Ali wrote on 15 August, 1839, the Sikh troops, being in the habit, within their own country, of destroying the cultivation and carrying away anything they like, commenced the same practice here, and pillaged some of the *bhoosa* (fodder for cattle), and fuel belonging to the people of the village.

15. The troops had no tents to protect them from rain and hoar frost and no blankets to sleep in.

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 224.

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European Officers

About 50 European officers were employed on the following terms:

1. Their services were temporary.
2. They were to marry Indian girls.
3. They would not eat beef.
4. They would not smoke tobacco in public.
5. They would grow beards and moustaches.
6. They would do nothing against Sikh religion and State.
7. If required they would not hesitate to fight against their own country.
8. They would attend the durbar and would not be permitted to sit.
9. They would not express any opinion on state affairs.
10. Like other courtiers they would wear empty scabbards.
11. They would never leave Panjab or Sikh service without written permission from the Maharaja or his successors.
12. In case of the Maharaja's displeasure, he would send them out of his dominions escorted by a Sikh contingent across the border into British or Afghan territory.
13. They would perform any duty assigned to them, military, civil, administrative, diplomatic or mechanical.
14. They signed an agreement and took oath of loyalty and fidelity on the *Bible*.
15. Ranjit Singh wanted them to domicile in Panjab by marrying Indian wives. Some of them were granted jagirs. They learnt to speak Panjabi. They might have become domiciled Panjabis had not the Sikh army turned against them after Ranjit Singh.

On 20 June, 1838, Osborne wrote, "Several of his European officers came to breakfast with us this morning. They do not seem very fond of his service, which is not to be wondered at, for they are both badly and irregularly paid, and are treated with little respect or confidence.

No Specialisation

Ranjit Singh looked upon his European officers as men of universal talent (*Har Fan Maula*). Avitabile and Ventura, military men, were appointed governors of provinces, along with their military duties. Harlan who had spent most of his time in civil service was in addition given command of troops. Honigberger, doctor, Homeopath, was appointed superintendent of a gunpowder manufactory. Ranjit Singh had heard of steamers. He ordered Ventura to build one. The General protested in vain, and asked for Rs. 40,000. The sum was at once sanctioned. Ventura

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asked Gardner. With the help of carpenters he prepared a double decked barge with paddle-wheels worked by hand. It cost Rs. 2,000. Out of Rs. 40,000, a sum of Rs. 15,000 was taken by the Bhais who had brought the money. Ranjit Singh had given Rs. 20,000 more. The Bhais took away Rs. 5,000. Thus out of Rs. 60,000 Gardner got Rs. 40,000 and the Bhais Rs. 20,000.[1]

Total Military Force

In 1832 Captain Murray computed his military force as follows:

Regular cavalry	12,811 men
Regular infantry	14,941 men
Total Regular troops	27,752 men
Other troops, horse and foot employed in the provinces	3,000 men
Irregular infantry	23,950 men
Total	26,950 men
Contingent of jagirdars	27,312 men
Grand total	82,014 men

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Hugel, 1836

The French Legion	8,000
Ghorcharhas both Regular and Irregular	4,000
Disciplined battalions	14,941
Cavalry in fortresses	3,000
Infantry platoons	23,950
Contingents of Sardars in cavalry	27,014
Total	80,905

Artillery

Heavy cannon	376
Jizails or light camel cannon	370

[1]Gardner, pp. 202-3.

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Of the whole only 50 were fit for service.
From 4,000 to 5,000 men were employed in this service

Army, Year 1838

Infantry, 35 regiments	28,723 men
Akalis	4,000 men
Garrison troops	32,000 men
Cavalry, Regular and Irregular Ghorcharhas, matchlock horsemen and Jagirdari troops	30,000 men

Shahamat Ali

In 1839 Shahamat Ali computed Ranjit Singh's army at 31 infantry battalions, 9 cavalry regiments, 298 cannon of different calibre. Of these 143 cannon were drawn by horses, 147 by bullocks and 8 howitzers. The Irregular cavalry numbered 11,800. Nearly one-half of the Regular army was commanded by European generals and commanders, and the rest by Panjabis.

The payment of Regular army was as follows:

31 Infantry battalions	Rs. 28,09,200
9 Cavalry regiments	Rs. 24,53,656
Horse artillery 298 pieces	Rs. 03,24,864
Irregular Sowars, 11,800	Rs. 72,08,562
Total	Rs. 1,27,96,282

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Total Salaries

Infantry	Rs. 28,09,200
Cavalry	Rs. 24,53,656
Horse artillery	Rs. 03,24,864
Irregular Sowars	Rs. 72,08,562
Total	Rs. 1,27,96,482

A few deductions were made from the payment to troops which reduced the actual expenditure considerably.[1]

Steinbach wrote:

The Sikh army at the time of Ranjit Singh's death consisted of 1,10,000 men. It was divided into Regulars and Irregulars. The Regular army

[1]Shahamat Ali, *Sikhs and Afghans*, pp. 23-25.

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consisted of 70,000 strong. It was drilled and trained by European officers. It was divided into cavalry, 13,000, and infantry and artillery 60,000.

The Irregulars numbered 40,000, cavalry 20,000 and infantry and matchlockmen 20,000.

The number of troops of chiefs and sardars obliged to supply the sovereign were above 30,000.

The artillery consisted of 376 guns and 370 swivels, mounted on camels or on light carriages. The artillery was manned by four to five thousand men.

(*Note*: In view of different estimates, we accept Steinbach's figures. He was a military officer, serving in Maharaja's army. His book, *The Punjaub*, gives a trustworthy account of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign.)

Gardner says that in 1839 the Maharaja's Regular army stood at 29,000 men with 192 guns. The monthly expenditure was Rs. 3,82,088.

According to Griffin, at the time of Maharaja's death, the total strength of the Regular army, consisting of infantry, cavalry and artillery numbered 29,168 men, 192 guns, and monthly payment was Rs. 3,82,088.

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Dr. Gopal Singh's estimates are as follows:

At the time of Ranjit's death in 1839, the army consisted of:

Infantry	92,000
Cavalry and Artillery	31,800
Total	1,23,800

384 heavy guns
400 light guns

Ranjit Singh cast his own guns in foundries located at Lahore under the supervision of Lahna Singh Majithia, assisted by General Court later on.

Some Observations

1. 14 March, 1831, Jacquemont after having seen the parade, remarked that the Sikh troops "were unique in the world on account of their graceful stature, bodily form, composure, garments and arms, and that in the art of drilling they were unparalleled in the world".

"With the finest material in the world for forming an army, requiring nothing but European officers to make them equal to the Company's, his

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love of money,–distrust and jealousy of Europeans... "his army will continue as it is utterly useless and inefficient."[1]

2. December, 1838, Emily Eden, sister of Lord Auckland, Governor-General of India, write: "I saw thousands of Ranjit's soldiers. They were all dressed in yellow or red satin. Their horses were all dressed in gold and silver tissues and ornaments and sparkling jewels. I really never saw so dazzling a sight.

"We drove for 2½ miles through a lane of Ranjit's horsemen. One troop was dressed entirely in yellow satin, with gold scarfs and shawls. The other half wore in *kimkhab*. Their arms were all gold. Many of them had collars of precious stones. Their shields and lances were all studded with gold. They had long beards down to their waists. They all wore in silver or gold tissue drapery. They bring it over their heads and pass round their beards to keep them from dust.

"After this there was another long line of troops extending 4½ miles. It was a white wall with a red coping. It consisted of 30,000 men.

"Then 50 horses were led past us. The first horse had on it emerald trappings, necklaces arranged on its neck and between its ears, and in front two enormous emeralds, nearly two inches square, set in gold frames. The crupper was all emeralds. There were stud ropes of gold. This was valued at 37 lakhs. The next horse was simply attired in diamonds and turquoises, another in pearls, and there was one with trappings of coral and pearls that was very pretty. Their saddle cloths have stones woven into them. It reduces European magnificence to a very low pitch."

"In enduring fatigue, absence from the prejudices of caste, and patience of discipline, the Sikh is not easily surpassed."[2]

3. Baron Charles Hugel in 1836 remarked that "It was flower of chivalry and nobility of the time".

4. Osborne in 1838 considered the Sikh soldiers "the finest material in the world for forming an army. He further added: "No native power has yet possessed so large and well disciplined a corps", and "creditable to any artillery in the world.

5. According to Hunter the Sikh army for steadiness and religious fervour had no parallel since the Ironsides of Oliver Cromwell.

Comment

Before Ranjit Singh the Panjab had enjoyed international reputation in the seventh century during the reign of Harshavardhana of Thanesar

[1]Osborne, op. cit., p. 151.
[2]Shahamat Ali, loc. cit., p. 25.

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due to the visit of the celebrated Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang. After twelve hundred years it again shot up into limelight under Ranjit Singh mainly on account of the Sikh army, which was equal to any armed force in the world at that time.

Mohanlal Kashmiri, a young man of twenty, during his travels in Central Asia, in 1832, happened to attend a royal durbar at Mashad in Iran, presided over by the Royal Prince Abbas Mirza, father of the King of Iran, on a national festival day. The Prince asked Mohan Lal whether Ranjit Singh's court vied in magnificence with what he now saw before him, and whether the Sikh army could compare in discipline and courage with His Highness' Sirbaz (Irani Regular troops).

To this Mohan Lal modestly yet firmly replied that Maharaja Ranjit Singh's durbar tents were made of Kashmir shawls and that even the floor was composed of the same costly material; and as for his army, if Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was to cross the Indus, His Highness would soon he glad to make good his retreat to his original government of Tabriz.

Ranjit Singh created his kingdom with the help of this army. He maintained peace and order in the country and checked foreign invasions by it. But the army was not given superior position to civil authorities. The army was not allowed to interfere in administration. Nor was it permitted to indulge in political matters. It did not challenge his authority, nor did it tyrannise the people.

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Every Jat village in Majha, Doaba and Riarki supplied a number of soldiers to the Maharaja's army. The village paid state revenues from the salaries of its sons. Having lived in big cities like Lahore and Amritsar, the Sikh soldiers did not lose interest in village life due to their lands. Possession of some cultivable land was an emblem of respect and prestige. Every Jat father while selecting a bridegroom for his daughter attached supreme consideration to his possession of arable land.

On account of army demands, trade, commerce and industry flourished in the country. The standard of living in the villages was considerably raised.

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CHAPTER 24

Law and Order

Anarchy Suppressed

For sixty years before Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore in 1799, Panjab had known no peace. Twenty times did foreign hordes invade this country from the north-west. They destroyed every hearth and home on their way. This factor can be realized from the truth that Ranjit Singh had to ban cutting off a tree within a radius of 50 km from Lahore. The reason was that there existed no old tree. All had been used by the invaders to warm themselves in wintry cold, and to cook food. Even the beams, rafters and shutters of houses had been consumed. Their invading period was from October to March, to avoid the bitter and biting cold of their homeland.

Further there is some rowdy element everywhere in our population. They made full use of these disturbances by committing thefts, robberies and murders. Not to speak of men, even women had to go out of home armed. Every village was surrounded by a mud wall and a ditch, generally dry. In the centre of the village there was a high tower to keep a watch. *Thikri pahra* was a normal feature of life in every town, village and hamlet. Ranjit Singh himself used to order at what time the city gates of Lahore should be closed and opened, and what should be the distance between the two shutters of the gate. Once on the occasion of a visit of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra he instructed that the opening between the shutters should be a little wider.

To check this internal lawlessness he adopted extremely strict and harsh measures. In the early years of his reign all thieves, dacoits and highwaymen were shot dead. There were professional trackers. They traced the footprints of men and animals. They successfully followed the footmarks. Where they ended, that village was called upon either to point

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out the marks leading to another village or to hand over the culprits along with the property stolen or looted within twenty-four hours. In case of failure of both alternatives, the whole male population above the age of 15 was shot dead. This is testified by Captain A. Mathews who travelled in the Panjab from Buria on the Yamuna to Wazirabad on the Chenab in 1808.

On 16 May, 1808, Mathews wrote:

> 16th, this part of the Punjab, as well as all other parts where the Rajah's authority exists, is under a good police, roads are safe for travellers; it seldom happening that capital crimes or robberies are committed from the severe examples he has lately made by hanging, in some instances, plunderers and putting to death the male inhabitants of villages, near which such have been committed, and so salutary has the effect been that single persons travel with their property without apprehension of danger.

Ranjit Singh's Contribution to Peace

The Maharaja gave unity and peace to the Panjab. He established order where there had been disorder. He created law in place of lawlessness and anarchy. His rule was a benevolent despotism. His interests coincided with the interests of his people. He believed in the Gandhian dictum: "Here go the people, I must follow them, because I am their leader". There was no restriction to keep arms.

Alexander Burnes in 1832 wrote: "He conducts all the affairs of his kingdom with surpassing energy and vigour, and yet he wields his power with a moderation quite unprecedented in an Eastern Prince". Sohan Lal recorded that one could safely travel from Lahore to Peshawar with golden articles in hand. (*Asashae tila dar dast gariftah*). Masson, a traveller, in 1837 stated: "At this day the operation of the laws is so effective, that there are few eastern countries in which the solitary traveller can pass with more safety than the Panjab".

He further added that all Hindus and Muslims prayed for the Maharaja's long life. Emily Eden in 1838 declared: "He is remarkably just in his government; he hardly ever takes away life, which is wonderful in a despot, and he is excessively beloved by his people."

Even on the North-West Frontier which was the most lawless region in his kingdom peace and order had been established. The *Attock District Gazetteer* states:

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> The authority of the Lahore Government was always admitted and often asserted, but subject to that admission the people were left to wrangle among themselves and to settle their own disputes with sword and dagger.... Tribal authority was relied on to keep society together and to prevent anarchy and realize revenue was the only care.

Lieutenant William Barr who travelled across Panjab from Lahore upto Peshawar in January, 1839, wrote about the 'North-Western' Frontier Province: "Nothing beyond a solitary assassination is now heard of unless the hill tribes descend from their fastness".

Similar was the case on the Sind Border among bloody warlike Baluchi tribes. Captain Wade wrote in 1837:

> "The Sikh garrison at Dera Ghazi Khan and Mithankot (130 km distant) does not exceed 500 men. The paucity of troops maintained by the Sikhs in such an extent of newly acquired country is the clearest evidence of their role in tranquillizing and subduing the insurrectionary spirit of the chiefs in the Derajat."

At Baramulla in Kashmir, Baron Charles Hugel's horse escaped from the stable. He thought it had been stolen. The matter was reported to the Thanadar. The animal could not be traced in the environs of the place. The Thanadar offered another horse in its place to Hugel. The offer was refused. The Kotwal then set the whole population in search of it. It was found grazing in the fields at a long distance.

Sawan Mal was the Governor of Multan. The stories of his justice were on the tongue of everybody. One day a peasant complained that his eldest son Ram Das had destroyed his crop by turning his horse loose in the field. The boy confessed he was guilty and sought forgiveness. The zamindar also appealed for clemency. Sawan Mal sent him to prison where he committed suicide.

Crimes and Punishment

Maharaja's Court, November 1, 1810: Nihal Singh Atariwala plundered the village of the refractory zamindars of Jehlam district. He told the Maharaja that he had brought notorious ringleaders as captives. Ranjit Singh ordered him to keep them in his own custody.

15 April, 1812: Mat Singh Bharania stated that the people of the Parganah of Jalandhar had approached him with a complaint that Hari Singh, the son of the contractor of that place, was tyrannizing over them.

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The Noble Sarkar said that he would be dismissed and replaced by Surat Singh Nami.

9 August, 1813: Ganga Ram Jamadar was going from Lahore to Sialkot at the head of 200 sepoys. On the way Hukma Singh Chimni attacked him due to personal enmity. About 200 men were killed and wounded on both sides. The Maharaja summoned Hukma Singh to Lahore.

8 February, 1816: One captain Raje Singh who had become tired of the enmity of Khushhal Singh Jamadar came in and submitted his resignation. The Noble Sarkar replied that he was at liberty to do whatever he liked, that if he wanted to stay on he could and that it was a matter of his own sweet will to stay or go. Thereupon that person obtained a permit to leave, and asked for another to cross the *ghat* on the way to Ludhiana. The Noble Sarkar gave him a letter of authority.

23 July, 1817: The zamindars of Uch came and each presented one rupee as *nazar* and said that the revenue collector of that place was tyrannizing over them. The Noble Sarkar told them to stay on there, adding that he would soon be called and punished in their very presence.

4 August, 1819: It was reported that Jiwand Singh Mokal had seized cattle belonging to the Taluqa of Mandera, and had not yet returned them. Ranjit Singh said that he was a very bad man and did not give up his bad habits.

5 August, 1817: Shaikh Budha said that the battalion of Parmat Singh, a companion of Kanwar Kharak Singh, had raised disturbance about their salaries and had come and stationed himself near the Masti Gate with two cannon in their possession. Diwan Bhawani Das was ordered to distribute their salaries at once.

6 August, 1817: It was reported that the zamindars of Rohtasgarh had not abandoned their evil practices. Ranjit Singh replied that he had several times sent orders to the garrison master for their suppression, that no control had been established over them, that he would send troops once again and that they would be punished. They replied that the garrison masters of the place took bribes from them.

7 April, 1831: Ventura and Lahna Singh were issued orders to march quickly and establish thanas in Derah Ghazi Khan, and to collect revenues for the spring crop and to see "that the people of that country might not get disheartened, and to keep in mind the prosperity of the country by taking care of the poor, and the weak so that the people might remain established in their homes and households and might not become wanderers in the desert of misfortune".

4 November, 1831, Diwali day: The Maharaja ordered two platoons to

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set up guards upon the farms so that nobody from royal troops might cause destruction to pastures. One platoon was sent to Phagwara to protect the farms and fields and pastures.

5 November, 1831, Phagwara: The Maharaja on a horse went to the bazaar through Delhi Gate, showered gold and enquired about every shop and stopped at the haveli of Phelu Shah to meet him, but he had gone to his garden. Passing through Hadiabad Gate the Maharaja visited the garden of Phelu Shah, and returned to his camp on the banks of the tank of Achhru Mal Banya.

6 November, 1831, Jalandhar: The Maharaja was to visit Kapurthala. One platoon was sent to protect the pastures of Kapurthala, and the other to protect the fields of Kartarpur.

25 February, 1832: The Panches of Sharakpur reported to the Maharaja, the devastation of their crops by the troops of the local chiefs. The Maharaja got angry and demanded an explanation from his prime minister, Raja Dhian Singh. He replied that the said chiefs did not obey his orders.

September, 1835: A letter was issued to Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh that his employees in those regions (on the way to Multan) were destroying and rendering desolate the places on their way. It must be stopped.

September, 1835: The Maharaja said that Avitabile was a big Kardar, yet he squeezed life out of the zamindars at the time of making collections of large sums from them. That on account of the tyranny and high-handedness of the Kardars of Missar Rup Lal the people and the zamindars were becoming wanderers and fugitives and escaping across the river Satluj.

9 and 10 November, 1835: Ratan Singh Gharjakhia had built a new fort in his village Sukh without the Maharaja's permission. The Maharaja stayed in that village on 9 and 10 November, 1835, got the fort demolished, fined him Rs. 25,000, confiscated all cash, jewellery, garments and sweets which Ratan Singh had collected for the marriage of his daughter. On 11 November, 1835, Ratan Chand Darhiwala from village Fatah Khoja was ordered to give one nose-ring and one broad sheet to everyone of the women and to expel them from the house and shut up all the places by padlocks and send the keys to the Maharaja. Atar Singh Sandhanwalia and Jamadar Khushhal Singh recommended him for pardon, but the Maharaja stuck fast to his decision.

The sweetmeats, flour and rice were distributed among the troops.

30 November, 1835: All the Sardars went to Ratan Singh and got a note written by him to pay Rs.11,500 and presented it to the Maharaja. The Maharaja allowed him to keep 500 bighas of land adjacent to Fatah

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Khoja, and ordered that the rest to be given over to the zamindars. He granted him a *doshala* and asked him to perform the marriage of his daughter.

19 December, 1835: The Maharaja said that at the time of his ride most of the people came to make complaints to him against the Raja Kalan (Dhian Singh) and the Jamadar (Khushhal Singh). He always told them that complaints against them should only be made to the Immortal God.

31 December, 1835: Ratan Singh Gharjakhia crossed river Satluj into British territory. The Maharaja remarked: "Diwans Moti Ram and Kirpa Ram had gone before and the said Sardar had left now".

The estates worth Rs. 21,000, situated in the neighbourhood of Lahore which were in possession of Gharjakhia were made over to Ventura Sahib. Gharjakhia complained to Captain Wade.

January, 1836: Nihal Singh Granthi stated that the soldiers of Prince Kharak Singh while making collections in the area of Wazirabad devastated a village lying on their way. A letter was issued to Chait Singh to pay Rs.100 as fine to the said Bhai. On the following day Prince Kharak Singh came. Nihal Singh also came. The prince flew into rage and said it was untrue. The Maharaja calmed him saying in future he would never listen to any complaint made against him.

21 March, 1836: Pindi Bhattian (Shaikhupura district). The zamindars came to see the Maharaja, "With a grateful feeling they said that they regarded his government quite in accordance with the dictates of religion and said that the people were all prospering".

July, 1836: The zamindars of Khem Karan complained against the Kardars of Sham Singh Atariwala, and requested to put them under Lahna Singh Majithia. It was reported that 100 shops at Kasur and 50 at Khem Karan had been deserted. The Maharaja said he would go there to see the situation himself. The command of Atariwala was immediately ended and the country was placed under the charge of Majithia Sardar.

The Maharaja admitted that the administration in British territory was better than in his own kingdom, because, "he saw his own subjects leaving their homes and households and go over to establish themselves in the country of the foreigners".

7 July, 1836: An emphatic order was issued to Prince Kharak Singh to destroy no pastures on the way from village of Niazbeg to Multan on any pretext; but on the other hand to protect and guard that country satisfactorily. Diwan Sawan Mal's country should not be destroyed like Sharakpur. He had been appointed for the control and administration of Shikarpur according to the advice of Captain Wade.

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15 August, 1836: The Maharaja called on a Sadhu named Dharagir, a resident of Kangra, in the garden of Diwan Kirpa Ram. He told the Maharaja that Jawahir Singh Bistri, officer in the mountainous regions indulged in drinking and evil deeds, and Missar Rup Lal had laid waste the country of Doaba, that cows and oxen in Lahore, were dying of starvation and nobody cared to feed them with grass or straw. The Maharaja heard the talk of the Sadhu and kept quiet because whatever the saintly person had said was true and correct.

22 October, 1836: The Maharaja reached Batala, showered gold all over the town, riding on an elephant. (The news of the death of Fatah Singh Ahluwalia was received.)

2 November, 1836: The Maharaja reached Sialkot and showered gold all over the town.

15 October, 1837: The Maharaja crossed Ravi in Sialkot district and put up in village Phagoki. The zamindars made complaints regarding destruction of their farms and cultivated fields.

January, 1838: News from Peshawar stated that scarcity of grain had passed all limits in the country of Peshawar. The Maharaja remitted octroi duties from Peshawar to Lahore thinking that traders would carry wheat to the affected regions. The Maharaja issued orders to Bhai Mahan Singh Kardar of Khallar, Bhai Dal Singh Kardar of Rawalpindi, Bhai Surjan Singh and others to interfere with nobody carrying grains to Attock or Peshawar with respect to octroi duties.

2 April, 1838: Peshaura Singh told the Maharaja that Diwan Hakim Rae was causing him great trouble. The Maharaja asked him to keep quiet.

3 April, 1838: At Sialkot the zamindars complained to the Maharaja that Sandhanwalia Sardars, Raja Dhian Singh and Jamadar Khushhal Singh spoilt their lands on their way.

17 May, 1838: The Maharaja was at village Mango which was the estate of Sohan Lal Suri. He took his evening meal there, and ordered him to keep a strict guard lest any soldier should interfere with the zamindars. The Maharaja asked the zamindars if they had to make any representation. They stated that Missar Beli Ram had built a new wall in their land. It was immediately demolished.

May, 1838: Osborne wrote that between the Satluj and Dinanagar, every village possessed a small mud fort in the centre, loop-holed for musketry, with a dry and shallow ditch, without guns.

14 June, 1838: At village Bilowal in Sialkot district, the Maharaja gave Rs. 100 to the zamindars to cover their loss.

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29 June, 1838: The Englishmen sent a camel rider from Lahore to Shimla to inform the Governor-General that Ranjit Singh had agreed to sign the treaty, and they would leave Lahore in a couple of days.

30 June, 1838: The Englishmen were awakened at 3 o'clock in the morning. The camel driver had come back covered with blood, and stripped to the skin. He was attacked by a band of Akalis 11 km from Lahore. They cut off one of his fingers, took away his camel, carbine, pistols, all his clothes, dispatches, and told him to return and inform his masters.

He was sent off to the Maharaja. Ranjit Singh paid him Rs.100 for his camel, another Rs.100 for his arms and clothes and Rs.50 for his finger. He came back well satisfied. Ranjit Singh sent a cavalry regiment to seize the culprits.

Osborne wrote, "He is the accuser, judge and jury, and the longest trial did not take more than five minutes."

A Proclamation

A proclamation was sent to Rajas Gulab Singh, and Suchet Singh, Misars Beli Ram, Rup Lal, Ram Kishan, Lahna Singh Majithia, Colonel Mihan Singh, Bhai Mohan Singh, Dal Singh and Surjan Sind and Diwan Sawan Mal to look after the subjects and to realize revenue from them according to the condition of the country, and specially to take care of the zamindars in every matter and to inflict no tyranny or oppression upon anyone of them and actively to safeguard the interest of the people.

5 October, 1838: The Maharaja was at village Karala near Zafarwal in Sialkot district. The zamindars cried and petitioned that Bawa, ruler of the place, oppressed them, and had built a strong fort to overawe them. The Sarkar got the fort demolished, resumed his jagir and fixed an allowance of Rs.700 for him.

30 December, 1838: Lord Auckland declared: "Earlier the country of the Panjab was unpopulated. Since it had come under the authority of the Sarkar it has flourished. The Governor-General has seen it himself".

January, 1839: Lieutenant William Barr noted that under the Maharaja's orders the gates of the city of Lahore were closed at 9 p.m. everyday and all ingress and egress was disallowed after the prescribed time.

25 February, 1839, at Dhamak situated between Jehlam and Rawalpindi.: Shahamat Ali wrote, "Dhamak is a small village; its supplies are scarce, water is obtained from a neighbouring stream, and is good. The place is held in jagir by Chatar Singh Atariwala, and was bastowed on his family by Ranjeet Singh's grandfather. Wheat is cultivated and grows well. There is no irrigation from wells. At present it is subject to a good deal of

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oppression from the Sirdar's managers; the jagirdar provides two hundred and fifty horsemen, but is liable to occasional exactions, which oblige him to oppress his people in his turn. Being on the highroad to Attock, the Sikh troops frequently alight here, and destroy everything, like a flight of locusts. Old coins are found in the vicinity, of the time of Alexander the Great and his successors."

25 March, 1839: It was written to Ventura that Avitabile had unduly taken large sums of money from Khatris and had demolished their houses. The money must be paid back to them and their houses must be rebuilt, and the Sarkar must be informed.

27 March, 1839: News from Peshawar stated that Colonel Wade's soldiers committed oppression on the poeple of Peshawar, plundered the harvest of the zamindars, and caused destruction of their farms.

28 March, 1839: Colonel Wade Wrote, "Stealing, doing evil deeds, dacoity, cheating, attacking by night was a characteristic of the residents of that country, and therefore, he had been compelled to speak to Avitabile to order two platoons to keep guard and protect him."

Comment

All along the Grand Trunk Road, the zamindars were made responsible for the safety of travellers on a fixed portion of the road passing by their villages. They were allowed to levy a small toll on the passing traffic. The Kardars were made responsible for all thefts committed within their jurisdiction. All the way serais were established to provide food and shelter.[1]

Ranjit Singh had to rule over poeple who were assertive, aggressive, turbulent and violent by nature and temperament. They seldom easily submitted to the rule of law. Alexander the Great had conquered Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkistan and Khurasan in 19 months. It took him almost the same time to subdue independent tribes and republics situated between Kabul and river Beas.

During the reign of Akbar the Great in February, 1586, an army of 8,000 men under Raja Birbal was cut to pieces in the Swat defile.

In Aurangzeb's reign, Muhammad Amin Khan, Viceroy of Afghanistan, in 1672, suffered a most humiliating and disastrous defeat in the Khaibar Pass. Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes:

Ten thousand men fell under the enemy's sword in the field, and above

[1]*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, III, 403; XX, 327.

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two krores of Rupees in cash and kind was looted by the enemy. They captured twenty thousand men and women and sent them to Central Asia for sale. The Viceroy's family–his mother, wife and daughter–had been made captives, and he had to secure their release by paying a huge ransom.

Ranjit Singh's record of conquest of these wild regions is simply amazing. In subduing these people with little harshness Ranjit Singh emerges as the greatest ruler of the Panjab and North-West Frontier for all times. Murray admits this fact when he writes:

The manner in which the brave and bigoted Mahomedans have, in many instances, been reconciled to the sway of a hated, and even despised sect, are amongst the most creditable features of the policy and career of Runjeet Singh.[1]

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[1](Anonymous) *History of the Punjab*, II, 198.

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PART FOUR

Communal Harmony

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CHAPTER 25

The Religious Policy

For 800 years Hindus including Sikhs and Muslims had lived apart,
Ranjit Singh treated all alike from the start;
Through impartiality he suppressed their harmful passion,
Slowly and gradually he created mutual affection.

NOT A THEOCRACY

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All contemporary writers both European and Indian are of the view that Ranjit Singh followed the policy of secularism. The Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a Sikh, but his government was not a theocracy. Endowed with wisdom and farsightedness, the Maharaja shaped his religious policy according to his own ideas and in accordance with the Sikh traditions of tolerance for all including their foes. The love for his subjects was enshrined in his heart. His mind was free from the fetters of bigotry. He ruled with unprecedented liberality and never caused bloodshed in the name of religion. He found merit in all religions and in all individuals whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian.

In 1831 Alexander Burnes wrote that Ranjit Singh was in every respect an extraordinary character. The Maharaja's French officers told him that he had no equal from Constantinople to India, and all of them had travelled through those countries. They declared that the most creditable trait in Ranjit Singh's character was his humanity.

Hugel wrote in 1836 that "from the Maharaja I experienced not only the protection and munificence becoming a great king but his kindness has left a lasting impression upon me". Masson who travelled on foot across Panjab to Afghanistan via Peshawar and returned via Multan wrote that "not a day passes without thousands of fervent aspirations for

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the continuance of his life. He is equally popular with the generality of his subjects, and rules with an equal hand both Mussulman and Hindu".

The Maharaja had equally great respect for the holy books of other religions. In wartime he issued positive orders to his officers and soldiers to treat the holy books and sacred places of all religions with great respect.

Appointments

His most trusted minister was Faqir Aziz-ud-din and personal physician. His brother Faqir Nur-ud-din was Governor of Lahore. His finances were managed by Rama Nand, Bhawani Das, Ganga Ram and Dina Nath. His Prime Minister was Dhian Singh, a Dogra Hindu Rajput. In his lifetime he conferred the title of Raja on four Hindus, Dhian Singh, his brothers Gulab Singh and Suchait Singh, and Dhian Singh's son Hira Singh. The Maharaja had many European Christians in his service such as Ventura, Allard, Court and Avitabile. His best generals were Diwan Mohkam Chand, Missar Diwan Chand and Hari Singh Nalwa. His artillery was under the command of Ghaus Khan, Ilahi Bakhsh and Mazhar Ali.

Magnanimity towards Muslim Adversaries

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Ranjit Singh treated his Muslim adversaries with magnanimity. On his conquering Kasur he granted a jagir worth two lakhs annually to the deposed chief at Mamdot. After the conquest of Multan he gave handsome jagirs to the sons of Nawab Muzaffar Khan. Sir Henry Lawrence recorded that whereas members of deposed families at Delhi and Kabul were living in poverty, those in Panjab were not left unprovided.

Grants to Muslim Shrines

(i) Syed Muhammad Latif wrote that in 1799 on his occupation of Lahore, Ranjit Singh restored the Sunahri Masjid from the possession of the Sikhs to the Muslims.

(ii) Moorcroft wrote that the buildings of Jahangir and Shah Jahan at Lahore were repaired by Ranjit Singh at a huge expenditure.

(iii) In 1818 after the conquest of Multan, the Maharaja sanctioned an annual grant of Rs. 35,000 for the upkeep of the tomb of Bahawal Haq.

(iv) In 1818 the Maharaja put up a huge dam at Lahore to save a Muslim tomb from being washed away by the Ravi.

(v) He spent large sums on the repairs of the tombs of Data Ganj Bakhsh and Mauj Darya at Lahore from time to time, and made annual offerings on the occasion of *urs*.

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Grants to Hindu Shrines

(i) In 1813 the Maharaja went on a pilgrimage to Jawalamukhi. He removed his shoes before entering the premises of the temple. He kept standing before the goddess for full four hours. His offerings consisted of a gold staff, a suit of clothes made of gold threads, a huge canopy of gold and Rs. 1200 in cash. He distributed sweets and Rs. 500 among Brahmans. He listened to the Katha or sermons going on there. In 1826 Ranjit Singh sent a sum of Rs. 25,000 for the golden roof of the Jawalamukhi temple.

(ii) He donated fourteen quintals of pure gold for gilding the temple of Vishwa Nath at Banaras which had been converted into a mosque by Aurangzeb.

(iii) In 1839, a little before his death he ordered a goblet of Ganga water to be placed on his chest, and distributed four goblets of gold and silver of Ganga water among Brahmans.

POLICY TOWARDS SIKHISM

On account of this extraordinary liberality of disposition of Ranjit Singh some European writers have suspected the reality of his being a Sikh. Victor Jacquemont in 1830 on a visit to the Panjab, wrote: "He is a Sikh by profession, a sceptic in reality."

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About the same time W.L. M'Ggregor, employed at Ludhiana Agency, stated: "With regard to Ranjit's own religious character, it is somewhat doubtful if he has any fixed system", W.G. Osborne met Ranjit Singh in 1838. He wrote, "Though he is by profession a soldier, in religion he is really a sceptic, and is difficult to say whether his superstition is real or only a mask assumed to gratify and conciliate his people."

These are false suspicions as it will be clear from the following events.

Respect for the Gurus

1. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had profound respect for the Gurus. His coins bore the name of Nanak and were called Nanakshahi Sikka.

2. When Ram Bagh was planted at Amritsar, the Maharaja was requested that it should be called Ranjit Singh's Bagh. He turned down the proposal saying that the garden should be named after Guru Ram Das, the founder of Amritsar.

3. A gurdwara was built in the name of Guru Ram Das in Chuna Mandi at Lahore, the original residence of the Guru.

4. Ranjit Singh built a magnificent edifice over the *samadhi* of Guru Arjan at Lahore.

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Respect for Granth Sahib

Ranjit Singh had the highest respect for the Holy *Granth*. He listened to the *Granth* everyday. Even during expeditions or tours he listened to the holy book. On 26 November, 1838, the Maharaja went to listen to the Holy *Granth* at Mananwala, a village situated between Kasur and Firozpur. He was offered a chair and sat in it. After a while he got up, felt sorry for having sat in the chair in the presence of the sacred scriptures. He prostrated before the *Granth* and implored forgiveness.[1]

Humble Servant of the Khalsa

The Maharaja looked upon himself as a humble servant of the Khalsa. His seal bore the inscription "*Akal Sahae Ranjit*" (God is the protector of Ranjit). He designated his government "Sarkar-e-Khalsa," or "Khalsaji".

Ranjit Singh had married Moran, a Muslim dancing girl. He was summoned to Amritsar before Akal Takht. The Maharaja obeyed. Akali Phula Singh denounced him in the open assembly for violating the social rules of the Khalsa. The Maharaja listened to his accusation in a spirit of humility, and stood penitent before the congregation. He begged forgiveness with folded hands again and again. Phula Singh declared that he must be given one hundred lashes on his bare back before the Panth. The Maharaja at once took off his shirt. He was tied to the trunk of a tamarind tree which stood in a wing of the Akal Takht with his hands bound on his back. The audience who loved him most intensely burst out into tears. Phula Singh declared:

> Khalsaji, the Maharaja has accepted the punishment that you decided to inflict upon him. But he is after all our king. We should honour his position. I suggest that he should be given only one stripe on his back as a token of his submission to the majesty of Social Law.

The whole assembly acclaimed the decision with a shout of joy. An Akali lightly struck him on his back. Phula Singh untied him from the tree, and the Maharaja bowed his head low before all.

Bedis

The Bedis were also called Nanakputras. They were the descendants of Lakshmi Das, son of Guru Nank. Among the Sikhs they were treated with the same distinction and respect as the Sayyids among the Muslims.

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 557.

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They were mainly travelling merchants. Maharaja Ranjit Singh allowed them the sole monopoly of trade in Majha. On account of their holy character they moved about fearlessly unarmed. One-fourth of the duty levied on goods was remitted to them. They wore on their turbans a cord made of wool for distinction. They were granted extensive revenue-free estates. Charan Singh, a Bedi of Phagwara, was granted two villages by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Instead of cash, the Bedis offered Chhoti Ilaichi to Maharaja Ranjit Singh by way of *nazar*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had profound regard for the Bedis. In 1826 two Bedis came to pay a visit to the Maharaja. He got up to receive them. They made their offerings in a plate. The Maharaja gave them Rs. 5,000 on their departure.

In 1827 the Maharaja went to pay his respect to a Nanakputra who was staying near the tomb of Jahangir at Shahdara and offered him Rs. 5,000. He declined to accept as a mark of displeasure. He complained that Nanakputras were ill-treated during his rule. The Maharaja said that the prosperity of his state was due to their favour and blessings. He assured him to redress their grievances. Then the *nazar* was accepted. The Maharaja sent 500 horsemen immediately to restore peace and order on his estates and ordered Khushhal Singh to compensate him for the losses he had sustained.

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The Bedis traded in all parts of India as well as in foreign places such as Kabul, Kandhar, Sistan and Makran. It was through these Nanakputras that the Maharaja established his relations with Diwan Chandu Lal, the Diwan of the Nizam of Haidarabad, and other foreign dignitaries.

The head of the Bedis was Baba Sahib Singh of Una. He accompanied Maharaja Ranjit Singh on several of his expeditions. The Maharaja rewarded him generously from time to time. He was granted the village of Udhowali in jagir. Sahib Singh and Bikraman Singh were always consulted on all important religious matters. The Bedis possessed charitable lands worth four lakhs of rupees.

Sodhis

The Sodhis claimed descent from the fourth Guru Ram Das, founder of Amritsar. The Sodhis were found mostly at Anandpur, Kiratpur, Dharamkot and Kartarpur. They descended from the fifth Guru Arjan. The Sodhis of the districts of Firozpur and Patiala mostly descended from Prithi Chand, the eldest brother of Guru Arjan. All the Sodhis were held in high esteem. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, they were subject neither to service nor to tribute. As merchants and traders they were exempted from half tolls. They took advantage of this privilege by

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becoming carriers for others. They possessed jagirs worth lakhs of rupees as *dharamarth*. They derived a great part of their income from the offerings made on the occasion of Holi-Hola at Anandpur.

Sodhi Sadhu Singh of Kartarpur was a man of note. In 1831 Captain Wade waited upon him. He was sitting on the ground in his castle situated in the centre of the town. He presented Wade and his companions with *khilats*. Captain Wade offered him a double-barrelled gun.

In 1837, two Sodhis of Anandpur, Kartar Singh and Ranjit Singh fell out. Baba Bikraman Singh of Una, son of Baba Sahib Singh, took up the cause of Kartar Singh and sent his troops to help him. Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered him to recall his troops immediately failing which he would face serious consequences. The Sodhis possessed charitable lands worth five lakhs of rupees.

Holy Places

Abchalnagar (Nander, Maharashtra)

11 January, 1837: Ranjit Singh granted Rs. 5,000 for the construction of gurdwara building.

19 January, 1838: The Maharaja sent a *hundi* worth Rs. 20,000 and seven suits of clothes to Abchalnagar by a bearer who was given Rs.1,000 for his travelling expenses.

Amritsar

11 February, 1812: On the Sankrant of Phagun the Maharaja riding an elephant went to Durbar Sahib, took bath in the sacred tank and offered Rs. 500 to Bungas.

10 October, 1812: Ranjit Singh went to Hari Mandar and offered Rs. 125 to *Granth Baba Sahib*, caused *halwa* and food to be distributed to everyone in his presence, took a little of it himself, and returned to the fort of Gobindgarh.

6 February, 1816: Ranjit Singh went to Hari Mandar Sahib, and offered large sums of money to *Granth Sahib*.

7 April, 1831: Ranjit Singh visited Durbar Sahib and made offerings.

22 April, 1831: Ranjit Singh called at Durbar Sahib and offered Rs. 200.

12 May, 1831: On the Sankrant day of Jeth, the Maharaja rode on a huge elephant to Durbar Sahib. He offered Rs. 1,100 to Hari Mandar and distributed among Akalis suits of clothes and other things and Rs. 5,000, to Granthis Rs. 800, to Brahmans Rs. 1,100 and a horse. He listened to

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the *Granth Sahib* for two hours. He offered Rs. 1,100 to Akal Bunga, Rs. 500 to Jhanda Bunga, Rs. 1,100 to his own Bunga.

15 September, 1831: On the Sankrant day of Asuj Ranjit Singh visited Hari Mandar, and distributed alms among Akalis and others.

14 November, 1831: On the Sankrant day of Maghar, the Maharaja visited Durbar Sahib and made an *ardas* of Rs. 1,100. He offered Rs. 1,100 at each Akal Bunga, Jhanda Bunga and Charyari Bunga.

12 May, 1832: He visited Hari Mandar and made *ardas*.

18 July, 1833: He visited and offered Rs. 1,100 to Hari Mandar, Rs. 325 to Akal Bunga, Rs. 250 each to Jhanda Bunga and Shahid Bunga, Rs. 200 to Dukh Bhanjani, Rs. 125 to *mutsaddis*, Rs. 125 to Bhai Jassa Singh Granthi, made an *ardas* of Rs. 125 before *Granth Sahib*, and then went to Ram Bagh.

15 August, 1833: On the Sankrant of Bhadon, he offered *ardas* at various places in the Durbar Sahib and distributed charities.

15 September, 1833: All the things offered as *nazar* by Amar Singh Sandhanwalia were presented to Durbar Sahib. They included seven horses and one silver canopy, many pairs of gold bangles and *doshalas*.

15 October, 1833: On the Sankrant day of Kartik, suits of clothes, horses and elephants were given away at Ram Bagh.

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18 December, 1833: On the Sankrant day of Poh, the Maharaja called at Durbar Sahib, offered *ardas* of 225 gold ducats, and made offerings at Akal Bunga, Jhanda Bunga, Shahid Bunga, Dukh Bhanjani and Baba Atal.

12 August, 1834: Ranjit Singh entered Durbar Sahib, made *ardas* of 125 ducats, offered a pearl necklace to *Granth Sahib*, rubbed his forehead before the *Granth*, made offerings to various Bungas, and then went to Ram Bagh.

15 August, 1834: On the Sankrant of Bhadon the Maharaja went to Kaulsar and distributed charities.

15 September, 1834: On the Sankrant of Asuj, Ranjit Singh visited Durbar Sahib, Akal Bunga and other places, and gave away one elephant, several horses, many buffaloes, and had *Tuladan*.

31 July, 1835: The Maharaja went to Durbar Sahib, made prostration and *ardas* of Rs. 1,100 at Hari Mandar, and Rs.125 each at many Bungas and Dukh Bhanjani.

1st week of August, 1835: The Maharaja ordered Bhai Gurmukh Singh to send a man to the suburbs of Jaipur to bring marble of perfect beauty and grace for the floor of Durbarji and its Parkarma.

15 August, 1835: On the Sankrant of Bhadon, Ranjit Singh went to

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Durbar Sahib, made prostration, offered *ardas* of Rs.525 at Hari Mandar and of lesser sums at various Bungas.

1st October, 1835: On the Dasahra day the Maharaja went to Durbar Sahib and offered a bejewelled golden umbrella, 500 gold ducats for gold work, and a carpet, a handkerchief and several other things for *Granth Sahib*, and made an *ardas* of Rs. 2,500.

May, 1836: The Maharaja ordered all the Sardars, staff and servants to offer *nazars* to Hari Mandarji. The Maharaja gave Rs. 5,100, many ranging from Rs. 1,100 to Rs. 250, and others according to their ranks.

15 September, 1836: Ranjit Singh made prostration at Durbar Sahib and offered an *ardas* of Rs. 1,100.

11 October, 1836: The Maharaja bathed in the sacred tank of Durbar Sahib, offered *ardas* of Rs. 250, gave Rs. 250 to Akal Bunga and Rs. 125 each to other Bungas. Dukh Bhanjani, Baba Atal and Shahidan.

Gurdwaras

The Maharaja encouraged construction of gurdwaras which were endowed with jagirs. Daily provisions (*rasad*) was provided for them. The Maharaja contributed liberally to the gurdwaras at Dera Baba Nanak, Goindwal, Khadur, Sialkot, Tarn Taran and Nander. The gurdwara Baoli Sahib at Lahore was granted a sum of Rs.127 daily. Its Granthi, Nihal Singh, was given a jagir worth Rs. 8,000. On 15 September, 1835 the Maharaja sent Chanda Singh to build a silver bungalow at Ichlanagar (Nander). He was provided with a sum of Rs. 25,000 and further grants were promised.

17 July, 1836: The Maharaja ordered construction of the city wall of Tarn Taran with 14 big gates through which elephants could pass along with howdahs.[1]

Bhais

There were several holy men at Lahore called Bhais. Their job was reading and reciting the Holy *Granth*. The prominent Bhais at the Lahore court were Gobind Ram, Gurmukh Singh, Ram Singh, Rupa and Wasti Ram. Bhai Wasti Ram was looked upon almost as a *guru* by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja offered him lakhs of rupees as a *nazar* and granted him rich jagirs. Bhai Rupa spent most of his time in prayers. He was loved by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike. The Maharaja visited him frequently.

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., p. 298.

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Bhais Gobind Ram, Gurmukh Singh and Ram Singh attended the durbar daily. The Maharaja had profound regard for them.

In 1837 the Maharaja visited Baba Kahan Singh and offered him Rs.125 for *ardas*.

Conversion to Sikhism

There were no forcible conversions to Sikh religion. Hindu young men of Majha and Doaba, fond of adventure, embraced Sikh religion of their own free will. Maharaja Ranjit Singh showed personal interest in the conversion of only five men. One was Khushhali Ram Brahman of Meerut district who became a Sikh under the name of Jamadar Khushhal Singh. Ranjit Singh bestowed innumerable favours on him, and never listened to any complaint against him. He often said complaints against Jamadar Khushhal Singh and Raja Dhian Singh should be made to Immortal God. On 4 August, 1817, 500 beams were given to the Jamadar free for building a mansion.

Tej Singh

The second to embrace Sikhism was Tej Ram, nephew of Jamadar Khushhal Singh, son of Nidha. Tej Ram was called from Meerut by Jamadar Khushhal Singh to act as his deputy. He entered Maharaja's service in 1811. He adopted Sikhism in 1816.

Ram Lal

The third man to adopt Sikh religion was Ram Lal, brother of Jamadar Khushhal Singh. He came to Lahore in 1817, and was taken in service by the Maharaja. When asked to embrace Sikhism, Ram Lal fled across river Satluj. Suspecting that Ram Lal had fled at the connivance of Khushhal Singh, the Maharaja deprived him of his office and placed him under restraint. When the news of the dismissal of his brother reached Ram Lal, he returned to Lahore, received Pahul and offered Rs. 5 in cash and five trays of sweets to the Maharaja. He changed his name to Ram Singh. The Maharaja conferred on him a *khilat* of four pieces and a sum of Rs. 200 in cash as a present.[1]

Parabh Dayal

The fourth to become a Sikh was a boy named Parabh Dayal. He embraced Sikhism of his own will in 1834, and was called Diwan Singh.

[1]*Jam-e-Jahan Numa*, 27 April, 1825: p. 7; Prinsep, op. cit., pp. 113-14; Hugel, op. cit., p. 384.

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The Maharaja gave him a pair of *doshalas* and Rs. 500, besides a jagir worth Rs. 1,000 in Jalandhar Doab.[1]

Har Krishan

In the same year Pandit Har Krishan, one of the sons of Pandit Madhusudan, adopted Sikh religion of his own accord, and was appointed Risaldar of a regiment. The Maharaja honoured him with a pair of *doshalas*, a necklace and Rs. 200 in cash.[2]

[1]*Jam-e-Jahan Numa*, 4 June, 1834, p. 10; S.R. Kohli, op. cit., p. 331.
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POLICY TOWARDS HINDUISM

Holy Places

Amar Nath Cave

Pilgrims to the holy shrine of Amar Nath in Kashmir were given free rations and some cash to meet their expenses.

Banaras

In 1832 the Maharaja gave pashmina worth Rs. 10,000 to Diwan Moti Ram to be distributed among the poor at Banaras and Gaya. In 1834, Bhairon Nath, an ascetic, leaving Amritsar for Banaras, was given Rs. 3,000 and two pairs of *doshalas* by way of *nazar*. In 1838 Ram Chand, a report-writer, told the Maharaja that he was going on a pilgrimage to Banaras, Gaya and Jagannath Puri. The Maharaja gave him Rs. 500 for his travelling expenses, and Rs. 50,000 for distribution on his behalf at those holy places. The Maharaja donated six quintals of gold for guilding one of the temples at Banaras.

Brahmans

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Sohan Lal Suri, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court historian says that in 1836 the Maharaja fell ill. He engaged a number of Brahmans to pray for him. The head Pandit washed the toes of other Brahmans, and gave that water to Maharaja to drink. The Maharaja drank it. He told the Maharaja that the merit of *path* (reading of holy books), *puja* (worship of God), *barat* (fasts), *simran* Sri Bhagwan (uttering the name of God), and *Sair-e-tirath* (pilgrimages to sacred places) would go to the Maharaja and he would recover health. The head Pandit of the Lahore Durbar was Madhu Sudan. In 1828 the *dharamarth* lands were restored to the Brahmans of Lahore.

In May, 1839, the Maharaja waited upon a *sadhu* who was living outside Raushanai Gate, Lahore, bent down his head and offered him Rs. 101 and requested him to pray for his health.

Chaubara of Chhajju Bhagat

Chhajju was a godly man who flourished in the time of Shah Jahan. He was a resident of Lahore and Bhatia by caste. He was a *saraf*, a dealer in bullion and ornaments. He was a devotee of God and was famous for his fair dealings and honesty. Later life was spent by him in meditation and prayer. He died in AD 1640. The *chaubara* or 1st floor rooms used by

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Chhajju as his place of worship was situated within Dhal Mohalla, and another *chaubara* outside Shah Alami Gate, Lahore.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh held this place in great respect. He visited it every Monday and made large offerings of money, sweets and *halwa* at the shrine. He built spacious chambers and rooms for the accommodation of sadhus, and granted revenue-free land for its maintenance. Each Monday and Tuesday a fair was held at this place, and crowds of men, women and children assembled there and musicians sang sacred songs. The *samadhi* or tomb of Chhajju was built of marble.

Diwan Chand

In 1819 Maharaja Ranjit Singh bought a *huqqa* for Rs. 20,000, and presented it to Missar Diwan Chand Zafar Jang, conqueror of Multan and Kashmir, as a gift.

Hardwar

Hardwar was as much sacred to him as to Hindus. He visited Hardwar on many occasions and lived on the sacred bank of the Ganga. He distributed huge sums there as alms. The Ganga water from Hardwar was often sent for by him. On 2 March, 1815, the Maharaja granted Rs. 50 to two bearer-coolies to meet their expenses for bringing water from the Ganga. In May, 1839, when the Maharaja was ill, he ordered one goblet (*surahi*) of the Ganga water to be placed on his chest. He felt some relief and gave away in alms four goblets of gold and silver full of Ganga water.

Jawalamukhi

The Maharaja visited Jawalamukhi frequently. Outside the temple premises he alighted from his horse, took off his shoes, entered the holy precincts, performed various ceremonies, and made heavy offerings. In 1812 the Maharaja visited the temple. He kept standing before the image of the goddess for full four hours and made an offering consisting of a gold staff, a gold-threaded suit of clothes, one huge canopy of gold and Rs. 1200 in cash. He distributed sweets and Rs. 500 among Brahmans. He listened to holy recitations (*katha*). In 1825 he went on a pilgrimage to Jawalamukhi again and presented to the temple a canopy of gold. The same year he ordered Missar Beli Ram, *darogha* of the *Toshakhana* to prepare a canopy of gold for the goddess and to collect material for worship and *hom* with *ghi*, in the shrine of the goddess. In 1825 the Maharaja ordered the *darogha* of buildings to construct a house at Jawalamukhi for

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an aged saint who was living in front of a temple at Jalandhar.

In 1826 Bhai Dhian Singh decided to go on a pilgrimage to Jawalamukhi. He was granted a *khilat* of three pieces and Rs. 1,000 for him and Rs. 25,000 to be presented to the goddess as a *nazar* from the Maharaja. In 1836 Prince Kharak Singh's mother expressed her desire to proceed on a pilgrimage to Jawalamukhi at the end of March. She was living at Shaikhupura. On her arrival at Lahore she was provided with an escort and necessary funds. At Lahore also oblations and sacrifices were frequently performed in honour of the goddess on behalf of the Maharaja. On 13 January, 1838, Prince Nau Nihal Singh was granted permission to visit Jawalamukhi and Kangra temple. In 1839 when Maharaja was confined to bed, he sent Pandit Radha Kishan to Jawalamukhi to offer prayers for his recovery and gave him Rs.15,000 to meet all the expenses. On 21 June, 1839, Sarkar sanctioned Rs. 5,000 for gold plating of the roof of the temple of Jawalamukhi.

Kangra

In 1838 the Kardar of Kangra resumed the *dharamarth* jagirs of the Brahmans of Rajgiri and Nadaun in Kangra district. They came to Lahore and sat in *dharna* outside the *deorhi* of the Maharaja. The Maharaja at once ordered Diwan Dina Nath to issue a *parwana* to the Kardar to restore their *dharamarth* jagirs.

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Katas

The Maharaja often went on a pilgrimage to Katas near Jehlam.

Lahore

The sadhus living in Badami Bagh at Lahore had elephants and horses, and possessed jagirs. The Maharaja granted revenue free twenty bighas of land with a well for the maintenance of the *samadh* of Haqiqat Rae at Lahore. Two villages, Salharia and Mandi, in Sialkot district, were granted to Sarup Singh, the care-taker of this *samadh*. In 1825, the Maharaja gave Rs. 125 to a Brahman to perform worship on his behalf for one month at the temple of Trilokinath Mahadev. In 1833 the Maharaja donated Rs. 2,000 to the temples at Lahore.

Leiah

Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a serai at Leiah in Muzaffargarh district in the name of Bawa Puran Daman.

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Phalku Ghat

There was an old serai on the bank of the Phalku stream about 3 km below Wazirabad. It had a bathing *ghat* enclosed by screens reserved for women to bathe. Maharaja Ranjit Singh got it repaired.

Puran Bhagat Well

On 31 March, 1838, the Maharaja, while returning from Jammu halted at the well of Puran Bhagat, drank its water and reached Sialkot. On 12 October, 1838, he again visited the well and drank water from it.

Saints

In 1836 the Maharaja went to pay his respects to a *sadhu* of Kangra who was staying in Diwan Kirpa Ram's garden at Lahore. On 19 February, 1839, the Maharaja called upon Baba Mangal Das, holy man, and offered him a *nazar* of Rs.125.

Temple of Surajkund Near Multan

It was granted Rs. 5 in cash every day, and one pice per rupee from the proceeds of customs duties of Multan. Seven revenue free wells were allocated to meet its expenses.

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Temple of Totla Mai at Multan

Ranjit Singh granted an annual sum of Rs. 100, a share in the cutsoms of the city, and a well as revenue-free for its maintenance.

Wazirabad

The *dhuni* or smoke-fire place of Pandit Mansa Ram, a celebrated saint, was situated on the right bank of the Chenab, 5 km from Wazirabad. The saint died in 1826. His *dhuni* was adorned with a temple. The Maharaja endowed it with village Kaleki for maintenance.

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POLICY TOWARDS ISLAM

Maharaja Ranjit Singh loved his Muslim subjects equally well. A good book can be written on this topic alone. Here only a few cases are given by way of illustration.

1st July, 1813: It was stated that four Mullahs were sitting in a village and one in Amritsar, endeavouring to cast an evil spell on Ranjit Singh. He had them caught and handed them over to the battalion of Shaikh Basawan.

Choha Faqir Saidan Shah

24 November, 1832, from Katas the Maharaja reached Choha Faqir Saidan Shah, and offered Rs. 100 to the *Mujawars* of the place.

Eminabad

Following the example of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Nanak Chand Chopra, a resident of Akalgarh, built a shrine for Shaikh Salim Shah Chishti at Eminabad at a cost of Rs. 40,000.

Fatahpur, Near Pindi Bhattian

14 November, 1838 Maharaja offered Rs. 125 to a Faqir as *nazar*.

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Jammu

29 March, 1838 Maharaja visited Faqir Alif Shah, and offered him Rs. 200 for an *ardas*.

Kashmir

The workers at Hazrat Bal and Makhdum Sahib's mausoleum were paid by the Sikh government and the buildings were renovated and repaired at state expenses. The Pam Rishi institution was supported by 116 villages donated to it.

Kasur

On 25 November, 1838 Maharaja called at the tomb Bhole Shah at Kasur and made an offering of Rs. 201.

Khangarh

14 November, 1838 he gave Rs. 225 to *Mujawars*.

Lahore

The Maharaja presented a sum of Rs. 1,000 every year on the occasion of death anniversary (*urs*) at the shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh. He got the tomb repaired and renovated periodically. In addition to *nazars* and grants in cash and jagir, the shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh was endowed with land having a well in village Kalanwala on Ravi in Lahore district.

Ranjit Singh granted 80 bighas of land with two wells for the support of the shrine of Ismail alias Wadda, situated at a distance of 2 km to the south of the Shalamar Gardens at Lahore. The Maharaja granted a jagir to meet the expenses of its annual repair.

9 January, 1811: Qazi Faqirullah proclaimed by drum all over the town on the day of Id-u-Zuha that all Musalmans must go to the Royal mosque to offer their Id prayers. Ranjit Singh granted the Qazi one fine woollen shawl. He ordered Mushtaq Rae, the accountant, to post men in every street and bylane of the city of Lahore to watch that everybody behaved properly, and in case of any disturbance he should be informed at once.

1833: The Maharaja donated Rs. 15,000 for the repairs of mosques at Lahore. In 1833 the Sarkar sent valuable *doshalas* to the mausoleums of Mian Mir and Data Ganj Bakhsh.

25 December, 1833: Large sums were handed over to Khalifa Nur-ud-din for distribution among beggars, the blind and the poor at Mian Mir, Hazrat Ganj Bakhsh, Sayyid Ishaq and Miran Shah.

7 February, 1836: Ranjit Singh gave Rs. 500 to Kahlifa Nur-ud-din for

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the repair of the tomb of Mian Mir.

22 June, 1836: Ranjit Singh went to Rahman Mastan Shah and offered him Rs. 100 and a valuable necklace of ebonite.

11 December, 1837: The Maharaja went to the mausoleum of Hazrat Ganj Bakhsh Hujveri, made an *ardas* of Rs. 125. Then he visited the mausoleum of Shah Abul Maali, offered Rs. 50, and Rs. 100 to Faqir Mastan Shah.

In 1838 Mai Chand Kaur, wife of Prince Kharak Singh, built a vaulted chamber in the mausoleum of Data Ganj Bakhsh.

22 June, 1838: The Maharaja went to the mausoleum of Hazrat Ganj Bakhsh Hujveri, made prostration and offered Rs. 125 as *nazar*.

8 January, 1839: He visited Mastan Shah and offered him Rs. 120.

Moran

Moran built a mosque in Papar Mandi inside Shah Alami Gate at Lahore in 1809.

Multan

In 1819 the Maharaja stayed at Multan for three months and visited many Muslim shrines. To the shrine of Makhdum Shah Girvezi he offered Rs. 51 and granted six villages revenue-free. A royal *parwana* was issued to the *Sajjadanashin*, the spiritual descendant and incharge of the shrine. This shrine had already been granted an annual subsidy of Rs. 700 by the Maharaja.

In 1825 the Maharaja visited the shrine of Sultan Sarwar at Multan. He offered a sheet with a *sehra* of gold as a *nazar* and distributed Rs. 100 among its servants. The jagir which had been sequestered was released.

The Sarkar donated Rs. 1,100 yearly for the maintenance of mausoleums of Shaikh Bahawal Haq and Shaikh Rukan-ud-din. A sum of Rs. 300 per annum was allotted for maintaining the shrine of Shah Shams-ud-din Aurezi at Multan.

The Maharaja assigned an estate to the descendants of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani.

Patti

13 November, 1835 the Maharaja went to see a faqir, but he "shut his doors against him".

Quran

One day Ranjit Singh in plain dress on roadside saw a bullock cart carrying a huge book. He asked the man what he was carrying. He replied

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he was a calligrapher and had made a beautiful copy of the *Quran*. Where was he going? To Delhi to sell it to any Muslim noble. How much did he expect the book should fetch? About Rs. 10,000. Was there none on this side of Delhi to buy it? None. Then we buy it, said Ranjit Singh. The amount was paid and the book was presented to Faqir Aziz-ud-din. This book is now preserved at the Lahore Museum.

Shah Balawal

A portion of the enclosure of the tomb of Shah Balawal had been swept away by the Ravi. There was a danger that the whole of it might be washed away. The Maharaja suggested that a new tomb at Government exepense should be built at a safer place. The remains of the saint were disinterred. The box containing the body was found suspended to an iron rod by a hook. On opening the box the body was found in a state of perfect preservation even after the lapse of two centuries. The new tomb stood near the garden of Diwan Dina Nath to the east of Lahore.

Sialkot

9 October, 1838 Ranjit Singh called on the Imam of Khanqah, and offered Rs. 100.

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Slaughter of Kine

Slaughter of kine was strictly forbidden throughout the Sikh kingdom and the perpetrator of the crime was subject to capital punishment. In March, 1812, a cow was slaughtered by the Muslims at Jalandhar. The guilty persons were imprisoned and a fine of Rs. 2,000 was imposed on them by Ajudhia Das Adalatiwala. On an appeal to the Maharaja the fine was increased to Rs. 3,000, and the culprits were set free.

In 1836 cow slaughter was forbidden in the province of Peshawar. It was proclaimed that the offenders would be severely punished.

In 1836 the Khatris and shopkeepers of Derah Ismail Khan reported that in a certain mohalla the Muslims were killing cows. The Akalis on hearing it made a raid on them. A fight ensued in which about 100 Akalis and some Muslims were killed and wounded. At nightfall all the residents of the mohalla fled to the neighbouring hills with their families.

Muslims in the Lahore Durbar

There were 41 Muslims who were high officials in the Sikh army including two generals. In the departments of Law and Judiciary 92 Muslims held high posts.

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POLICY TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY

The Maharaja requested Vigne to read out and explain to him the holy *Bible*. When Vigne brought out the holy book, the Maharaja touched it with his forehead most reverently and listened to it with keen interest and attention.

Among the Maharaja's Christian officers there were Frenchmen, Englishmen, Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, Russians, Anglo-Indians, Americans, a German and an Austrian. He appointed them as governors of provinces and generals and commanders in the army. Colonel Gardner put their number at 42 and Carmichael Smyth at 39.

Wolff Joseph came to Lahore in 1832 to propagate Christianity. He got the posters stuck up on the walls in lanes and streets of Lahore. In his lectures he denounced other religions and urged the people to turn to Christ. He received a polite letter of disapprobation from Maharaja Ranjit Singh saying:

In sakhun nabayad guft.
(Such words must not be said.)

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In June, 1832 Wolff Joseph was at Amritsar. A discussion took place between him and a Hari Singh. Hari Singh asked if a man wished to retire from the world and devote himself to God what should he do to his wife and children according to Christianity. Wolff Joseph replied: "Christianity is a religion which makes people happy without a wife and with a wife, and it is a religion which one can practise without a wife, and with a wife".

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CHARITIES FOR ALL

The Maharaja used to place Rs.100 every night under his pillow This sum was distributed among the poor next morning through Bhai Ram Singh without any consideration of religion. In 1814 the Maharaja ordered Munshi Devi Das to distribute among the poor another one hundred rupees everyday.

Ekadashi, Chaudas, Amavas, and Sankrant were the important days for the Maharaja to give alms. The articles given in charity on these occasions comprised cows with horns decorated with gold and silver, horses with trappings, elephants with silver howdahs, buffaloes, garments of cotton and silk, images of gold and silver, rings and bracelets of gold, butkis of gold and silver, fruit, grain, *mash*, *til*, sugar, ghi, sweets, mirrors, *doshalas*, cots, chaukis, fans and copper utensils, besides thousands of rupees in cash.

11 July, 1817 Somti Amavas: Ranjit Singh rode out to the bank of river Ravi and gave away in charity five buffaloes, five suits of clothes, Rs. 500 in cash and several other suitable things. He returned to the city and distributed food to 200 men who wore the sacred thread.

11 March, 183-, Sankrant of Chait: Ranjit Singh gave away in charity one elephant, one horse, cows, buffaloes, suits of clothes, large amounts of money and performed his *tuladan* against money and grain, and gave them to Akalis and Brahmans.

11 April, 1836: On the Sankrant of Baisakh 8 gold pitchers and Rs. 15,000 were given away in charity.

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The solar and lunar eclipses were also occasions for distribution of alms. On the occasion of a solar eclipse,the Maharaja went either to Amritsar or Tarn Taran to have a dip in the holy tank. He gave away in charity *mash, til,* clothes, *doshalas,* golden utensils and cash. On 12 April, 1828 there was a solar eclipse. The Maharaja went to Durbar Sahib, Amritsar. He had a dip in the holy tank, and then weighed himself and distributed Rs. 12,000. He then visited the fair, and threw money with both hands to be picked up by the people.

On the occasions of lunar eclipses the articles given in charity comprised *mash*, *til*, cows and cash.

2 July, 1833, eclipse: On the eclipse day one elephant, 70 buffaloes, many cows, and large sums of money were distributed among the poor.

Tuladan

The Maharaja used to weigh himself in scales, from one to seven times against *mash*, *til*, grain, *ghi*, sweet potatoes, rice, linseed, iron, copper, shawls, clothes, ornaments, copper and bronze utensils, gold and silver. All these things were distributed among Brahmans and the poor. In 1831 Maharaja weighed himself against cash, and distributed the money among *sadhus*.

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Ghusal-e-Sehat (bath after illness)

On recovery from illness alms were given to Brahmans and the poor. In 1834 the Maharaja asked Pandit Madhu Sudan to fix an auspicious time for his bath of recovery. He bathed in warm water. The nobles offered congratulations and *tasaddaq* (things to be given in charity). The Maharaja distributed Rs.1,000 among the poor, and sent several thousand rupees to other places for distribution among the destitutes. A salute of eleven guns was fired and the city was illuminated. In 1835 on the day of his *Ghusal-e-Sehat* two prisoners were set free from each prison. In 1839, on some improvement in his health during illness 51 cows, 1,100 golden *butkis*, clothes and horses were donated.

Langar

The Maharaja established a permanent *sada-barat* or *langar* or free mess at Lahore. In 1825 Kanah Singh, darogha of the *sada-barat*, told the Maharaja that the daily consumption of flour in the *langar* was 25 kilograms. In 1826 the darogha reported to the Maharaja that the expenses of the *langar* had gone up due to the higher prices of grain. A sum of Rs. 700 was added to its funds. Another *langar* was running at Pul

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Twaif, a place between Lahore and Amritsar. Every traveller and the poor were fed there. One more *langar* of the Maharaja was at Amritsar. In 1828 nearly 1,000 faqirs came from Kashmir to Amritsar. Under Maharaja's orders all of them were provided with free board and lodging. In 1839 the Maharaja gave a jagir worth Rs. 25,000 to Durbar Sahib, Amritsar, to meet the expenses of the *langar* attached to it. Mehar Singh jagirdar was running a *langar*. He decided to discontinue it. The Maharaja instructed him to keep it open for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike, and he agreed to bear a part of the expenses.

Wells

The Maharaja constructed a large well with a flight of steps leading to the water for the travellers on the road from Kot Kamalia to Multan.

Cost of Charity

Bute Shah estimated the cost of his charity in cash and kind on the occasion of solar eclipses at one lakh of rupees. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's department of charity cost the state exchequer one-tenth of the total revenues amounting nearly to twenty lakhs a year. As regards the value of money in those days Baron Charles Hugel in 1836 wrote that the family of a labourer consisting of four members could live for a month on nine annas or 56 paise of today.

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Comment

The Sikh rule in the Panjab was very popular with the masses. The reason was that the Sikh rulers never attempted to enforce their religion on Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Everyone was free to pursue his own faith. Never was a person dispossessed of his wealth or demoted in rank or dismissed from service on the basis of religion.

The Hindus who embraced Sikhism did so of their own sweet will. Munshi Abdul Karim states that thousands of Hindus became Sikhs voluntarily. According to Alexander Burnes the number of converts from Hinduism to Sikh religion averaged 5,000 every year. Ranjit Singh never allowed religion to mix with politics. He kept both of them quite apart. His plea was that his subjects were not Sikhs alone. They were in a very small minority. The vast majority of them consisted of Hindus and Muslims. From this point of view he never called a *Gurmata*, and took consultations with his Hindu and Muslim ministers, though the final decision was his own.

The policy of toleration vigorously pursued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh

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had far-reaching effects. The Muslims were highly pleased with him. When Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly preached a holy war against the Sikh rule, he received no support from the Muslims of the Panjab.

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CHAPTER 26

Relations with Akalis

The Two Groups

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century the Sikh misaldars had established their residential quarters (*katra*) at Amritsar in close proximity of Durbar Sahib. At this time the Akalis were divided into two groups. The small group of intellectuals was in control of the Akal Takht and the larger group of idlers dominated the Hari Mandar. The Akalis of the Akal Takht *Gurmatas*, held and exercised some supremacy over the Sikh Sardars. The idlers were jealous of the intellectual group and on account of their larger number and greater fanaticism tried to establish their authority over the Sardars. The Sardars drove them out of Amritsar. In their exasperation these Akalis extorted lentil (*dal*), flour, salt, ghi from the families of absentee Sikh Sardars by requests and threats. In some cases they took away their horses to ride on.

In the last decade of the eighteenth century during Shah Zaman's invasions, the second group of Akalis returned to Amritsar in large numbers for the protection of Durbar Sahib, and they firmly settled down in its possession. The Sikh Sardars now began to respect them. They felt that the cause even of one Akali was the cause of the whole Panth. The intellectual group devoted themselves to maintain the purity and pristine glory of the original Khalsa *dharam* of the time of Guru Gobind Singh. The other sect began to play the role of the Defender of the Faith and that of the Ghazis or Mujahidin of Islam.

Supremacy over the Sikh Sardars and control of Hari Mandar created in the idlers group the spirit of complete independence and defiance of all worldly authority. They submitted only to the holy trinity of Waheguru (God), Gurus and *Granth*, and cared for no earthly power. They acknowledged no mundane law. They scorned death and all sorts of dangers.

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In the service of the Panth. Robbery and murder were no sins or crimes in their eyes. They were bold and gallant and made excellent soldiers. They rushed furiously upon an enemy and fought most desperately without the least consideration of their own lives. In spite of religious fanaticism, and complete hatred of Europeans, some of them possessed a kind and gentle heart. Emily Eden, sister of Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of British India, wrote in 1839 that William Osborne missed one of his relays of horses. He lay down under a tree to rest while the guide rode on for a conveyance. He fell asleep. When he awoke, he found an Akali sitting by him and fanning him with a large fan in his hand.

Under Ranjit Singh

When the intelligence of loot and plunder by Akalis reached Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he called them for explanation of their misconduct. They replied: "We commit such acts because of hunger. If you supply necessaries of life, why should we act thus"?[1]

Maharaja Ranjit Singh realized that the Akalis would be most useful in the army. About 3,000 of them were employed in the irregular cavalry. Their battalions were called Changari or live piece of coal of blazing fire. There they rendered most useful service to the Maharaja.

When the rank and file of the army in the face of enemy's deadly fire declined to advance or tried to retreat, the Akalis rushed and furiously pounced upon their opponents, and in most cases snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. In the Maharaja's wars against ferocious Afghans and Pathans, their marvellous exploits are to be written in letters of gold, and sung all over the country in the form of heroic ballads like those of Alha-Udal and Jaimal-Fatta.

They were indeed strange warriors without any order or discipline or training. They simply depended upon religious zest amounting to fanaticism. They declared themselves defenders of their faith, against Muslims and Europeans. Loaded with all sorts of arms, they moved about generally on horseback.

Akali Sadhu Singh

In 1818, in the siege of Multan the Sikh army could not capture the fort in several assaults. Some dare-devils fixed up ladders to climb up. The garrison let loose upon them a hailstorm of bullets, burning coal,

[1]*Dar jawab me goend az sabab gursangi in kar me kunem. Agar shuma istamdad mayahtaj namaend, chira inguna kar ba aml arem.* (Ali-ud-din, p. 440.)

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and buckets full of boiling mustard oil. Akali Sadhu Singh, one of the picked men of Phula Singh's party, accompanied by a few companions, rushed up, succeeded in climbing to the top, attacked the Afghans, killing everyone who came in their way. The Sikh army took advantage of this opportunity, and in two hours carried the citadel. Nawab Muzaffar Khan and two of his sons were cut down in the gateway. The fort was taken and victory gained. Sadhu Singh and 35 out of his 40 followers laid down their lives.

Akali Phula Singh

The story of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign cannot be complete without an account of Akali Phula Singh. He was the son of a poor Jat and became an attendant at Akal Bungah[1] in the Hari Mandar complex at Amritsar. He rose into limelight in February, 1809, when he attacked Metcalfe's soldiers celebrating the Muharram festival at Amritsar. He suffered a defeat in encountering them. He rushed to the Maharaja with a naked sword and demanded wholesale slaughter of Metcalfe and his escorts. The shrewd Maharaja knew that the demand was entirely unjustified, and also that a curt refusal would put him into serious difficulties. The Maharaja bowed his head before him, saying that first he should sever the Maharaja's head, and do anything against the British envoy afterwards. This cooled Phula Singh's anger. A pair of gold bangles was given to Phula Singh, while all his companions were presented with suitable gifts, and the whole party was entertained to a sumptuous feast of *karahprasad* and sweets.

At the head of 3 to 4 thousand Akalis and Nihangs, Phula Singh moved about the country, plundering the rich and patronising the poor, and became the Robin Hood of the Majha. In December, 1809 he entered into Malwa, attacked the surveying party under Lieutenant White, and put up in the Gurdwara of Damdama Sahib in Bhatinda district. The British authorities ordered Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala, Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha, Raja Bhag Singh of Jind and Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal to arrest or expel Phula Singh. On the approach of their united force, Phula Singh escaped and reached Amritsar.

The Maharaja felt that in order to please the British he must take some action against Phula Singh for his intrusion into British territory and molesting an Englishman and his party. He ordered Fatah Singh

[1]Akal Bungah is the most sacred of all the Bungahs at Amritsar. Maharaja Ranjit Singh offered his *nazars* first of all at Akal Bungah. It was here that Sikhs were initiated into Sikh religion.

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Ahluwalia to expel Phula Singh from Amritsar and give him Rs.100 for his support. Fatah Singh asked Phula Singh to leave Amritsar. Phula Singh conveyed a harsh and indignant reply saying he would resist him to the last.

The Maharaja politely asked Phula Singh to attend his court. On his arrival, Ranjit Singh gently remonstrated with him on his rash conduct, offered him rich presents and induced him to remain peaceful. This produced no effect on him. The number of his followers rose to four or five thousand. He subjected the most powerful chiefs to his lawless activities. He seized horses from their stables and arms and other things from their houses. He forced them to give him large sums of money for maintenance of his followers. If his demand was not complied with, he plundered their property. Even Maharaja Ranjit Singh was not exempted from payment of this impost. In order to win over the Akali freebooter, the Maharaja frequently bestowed on him cash and jagirs by way of gifts.

He obtained a lion's share in the contributions made to Durbar Sahib on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali. Once on 15 April, 1812, he demanded Rs.1,000 out of Rs.1,100 and one horse from the offerings made on the Baisakhi day. His claim was disputed by other Akalis. He attacked them with arrows and guns. A couple of men were killed and wounded on both sides. Ranjit Singh sent his personal horsemen to suppress the disturbance. Diwan Moti Ram captured him and sent him under a strong guard to Lahore.

The same trouble rose again two years later. Ranjit Singh called upon Akalis and men of Phula Singh and listened to their claims about their shares of income. He ordered men of Phula Singh to take only that portion as their share which had been fixed for a long time, and should not claim anything more from Akalis. If he claimed more and Akalis complained, he and his men would be turned out of Amritsar altogether.

In Sammat 1871 (AD 1814-15) Phula Singh helped by Nihal Singh Atariwala fomented disturbances south of the Satluj. He was captured in the neighbourhood of Kot Kapura and brought to Lahore. A few references are given below:

3 March, 1815, Ranjit Singh granted Rs. 40 daily to Phula Singh Akalia and would also grant a jagir to him.

7 February, 1816, the Akalis and other Babas of Tarn Taran requested alms. He gave them Rs. 100. He then rode out towards the tank of Tarn Taran, made an offering of Rs. 500 in cash and two horses equipped with gold threaded saddles to the *Granth Sahib* and staying there for a few

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hours returned to his camp.

On 10 January, 1817, Ranjit Singh was informed that the place of the 'Bairagis' had been robbed by Phula Singh Akali. The Maharaja sent a message to the battalion of the Najibs and the Sikhs to keep ready for they would be appointed to punish Phula Singh.

On 30 March, 1817, a letter came from Davind Singh and Amar Singh intimating that they had reached near Tawabi at a distance of two kos from Phula Singh Akali and had stopped the supply of grain to him from all sides. The reply was sent if he surrendered two cannon and one elephant, and himself agreed to come over to Amritsar, he should not be interfered with. If he refused he should be brought as a captive to the Noble Sarkar.

On 3 August, 1817, a letter from Ganda Singh intimated that Phula Singh Akalia had told him that if he were given a promise (of pardon) on oath he would present himself before the Noble Sarkar.

A note was sent to Sardar Sada Singh and Hardas Singh to go to Phula Singh Akalia and bring him to the Noble Sarkar.

After the death of his brother Wazir Fatah Khan in 1818, Azim Khan had established himself in power at Kabul. He was determined to stabilise his power over the trans-Indus region of Peshawar. In 1823 he marched down the Kabul river at the head of a large army. His brother Dost Muhammad Khan was with him.

Samad Khan, a Pathan leader, had raised a separate force of thousands of Ghazis, consisting of Khatak and Yusafzai tribesmen. He entrenched himself on the left bank of the Kabul river. Dost Muhammad Khan supported him. Azim Khan had not yet joined Samad Khan when Ranjit Singh appeared on the scene, and did not alllow him and his army to join Samad Khan.

With the choicest portion of his army, Ranjit Singh crossed the Kabul river, and immediately attacked Samad Khan's forces at Tihri situated on the northern bank of the Kabul or Lunda river. The encounter between the two forces was so ferocious and bloody that Sikh troops could not make any advance after their initial success. All encouragement by the Maharaja failed to induce the Sikh army to march forward. A shameful defeat was in sight.

Just at this juncture, the Maharaja, to his great delight, saw the black flags of Phula Singh and his followers moving along the foot and up the disputed hill. Phula Singh from his elephant, shouted to the army to advance and follow him. There was no response to his call. Unmindful of the smallness of his force, up the hill and towards the foe went Phula

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Singh and his men, resolved to decide the fate of the battle in their favour. Their determination was not to die fighting like the Rajputs, but to kill and win.

The Afghans rained continuous fire upon them. Finding that this did not deter the Akalis from advancing, the Ghazis rushed upon them with drawn swords to cut down like hay this small body of desperadoes. Phula Singh ordered his men to dismount and to drive the horses towards the Mujahidin, and then have a sword duel with them. The Akalis shouted their war cry, 'Sat Sri Akal', which was responded by the Pathans with 'Ya Allah, Ya Ali'.

The frightened horses rushed wildly into the ranks of the enemy. This caused considerable confusion in the Mujahidin. On observing this the Akalis rushed forward, sword in hand, with such impetuosity that the enemy was pushed down the hill. There the Maharaja was ready to block their passage. In order to elude the Akalis, they made their way to the other side of the hill where, another force of the Mujahidin, numbering between 8 to 10 thousand, was strongly posted. Phula Singh was not the man to permit them to escape so easily. He was quite familiar with such enemy tactics. The army inspired by the heroism of Akalis, hastened to join the little band of heroes, and completely routed the Afghan detachment. Then they advanced to dislodge the more powerful body of the enemy from its position on the other side of the hill.

Phula Singh was ahead of all. The enemy was showering bullets like a hailstorm. The Mahavat of his elephant refused to move forward. Phula Singh drew a pistol from his belt and shot him dead through the head. He, then, with the point of his sword, urged the elephant forward in the thick of the enemy. He had not advanced much farther when a bullet from the matchlock of a Ghazi entered his forehead, and he fell back in his howdah a corpse. The death of their leader infuriated his devoted band and the army. Though their first and second charges were repulsed, yet they returned to the assault again and again with more desperate resolution. Their reckless valour enabled the Sikh army to penetrate into the enemy positions, and dislodge them from the hill side with great slaughter. Those Afghans who had concealed themselves in the long grass of the neighbouring swamp were shot dead like ducks and drakes. The Sikhs lost about 5,000 men, and the Afghans double that number. Such devil-may-care contest, the Afghans and Pathans had not experienced since the dawn of history. This battle broke down their spirit of resistance and they admitted that the Sikh sword was indeed sharper than the Afghan sword. The fleeing Pathans were heard saying: *'Tobah, tobah,*

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Khuda ham Khalsa shudah". (Alas! even God has become a Sikh.).

The battle of Tihri was won by the Maharaja due to the dare-devilry of Phula Singh who became a martyr for his Panth and Khalsa State. A *samadh* was erected over his remains on the spot where he fell. It became a place of pilgrimage for Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike. The Muslim women lighted an earthen lamp (*diwa*) on Thursdays praying for safety of their children from the spirit of the hero of Tihri.

Azim Khan fled to Kabul without firing a single shot. The disgrace of defeat prayed upon his mind so heavily that he fell ill on the road to Kabul, and died shortly after his arrival there. On his deathbed he summoned his wives to his presence, dispossessed them of their jewellery. He delivered it with whole of his property to Habibullah Khan, his eldest son. He asked him to wipe off the disgrace from his father's name.

Other Akalis and Nihangs

After the death of Phula Singh, his wife assumed headship of Akalis. She was a bold woman though not so daring as her husband. The other Akali leaders in Phula Singh's band were Hari Singh, Khushhal Singh, Naina Singh, Sham Singh, Jiwan Singh, Kishan Singh and Durga Singh.

Delhi Gate

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Nihangs or the extremist Akalis gave a lot of trouble to Ranjit Singh. Once they gathered at Shahid Ganj and stopped the people from passing through the Delhi Gate. Ranjit Singh placed two guns outside the Delhi Gate to check their entry into the city. Then they gathered at Mian Mir, 8 km from Lahore. Ranjit Singh sent a strong force against them. In an engagement they were driven away to Amritsar.

Maharaja's Tent

On another occasion a Nihang tried to enter Ranjit Singh's tent by the backdoor. A sentinel on duty checked him. The Nihang drew out his sword and cut off an arm of the sentinel. The Nihang had a servant with him. Both were arrested. The servant was let off without any punishment because he had not behaved in an aggressive manner. The Nihang was produced before the Maharaja. Under his orders the Nihang's ears, nose and hands were cut off with the same dagger with which he had cut off the arm of the sepoy on duty. After this operation he ran to a well to jump into it. The people who were on the well held him as the water of the well would have been polluted. The matter was reported to Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja put him in the charge of Dr. Honigberger for treatment and

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safe custody. He told Honigberger that his only object in entering the Maharaja's tent was to receive a *gapha* (great gift), as his profession was to live by pillage. Honigberger wrote, "I introduced to our distinguished guests, Col. Wade and Dr. Murray an Akalee or Nihang, whose nose, ears and hands had been cut off by order of Ranjit Singh."

Bellasis

A foreigner called Bellasis by H.M. Lawrence, saw some Akalis accompanying Ranjit Singh in morning ride: "conspicuous by their high blue turbans, girdled with quoits; but more so by their wild, maniac looks and insolent gestures. On seeing me approach, some of these hailed me with curses and abuse".

Durbar Sahib in August, 1831: Sardar Desa Singh accompanied Burnes on a visit to Durbar Sahib so that none of the Akalis might become a source of trouble or molestation, and afterwards to make him reach Jandiala safely.

Rupar

On 28 October, 1831, at Rupar, on the occasion of Maharaja's meeting with Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, an Akali, with a drawn sword, rushed upon Ranjit Singh. He was captured by attendants. Under Maharaja's orders he was mercilessly beaten and then handed over to a platoon.

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Hari-ke Patan

At Hari-ke Patan Ranjit Singh had posted a strong body of 400 to 500 armed men to protect the villages south of the Satluj from Akalis or Nihangs. He had posted strong guards at other ferries on the Satluj also. In January, 1832, Alexander Burnes wrote:

> These Acalis or Nihungs are not numerous, but they commit the greatest outrages, and shield themselves under their religious character. They evince no greater hostility to those of another creed than to a Seik, and would appear to be at war with mankind. Their fanaticism borders on insanity.

At village Suga, 13 km west of Patti on 13 January, 1832, Burnes and Mohan Lal saw with their own eyes a contingent of 500 horse with two field guns going to chastise Akalis who wanted to create disturbance in the British territory. Mohan Lal recorded that at Hari-ke a select body of

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Ranjit Singh's cavalry was stationed to protect the villagers against the Akalis and Nihangs. "These violent and ignorant men do not fear Ranjit Singh, who has often run the risk of his life from these bigoted people... The Nihangs are careless of their own lives and consequently of those of others".

He further stated: "These men are always described by Ranjit Singh as *kaj faham wa kotah andesh*, which means a people of bad understanding and short-sighted".

The Maharaja summoned the head of the Akalis who were determined to create disturbances in the Cis-Satluj region under the British, and told him about their misconduct. The Akali shouted: "You blind rascal, if you say one word more, I will go and burn down some villages belonging to England, and tell them that you have sent me".

Amritsar 11 January, 1833

On the Sankrant of Magh, pashmina worth Rs.7,000 was given to Akalis, by the Maharaja.

Patti in August, 1833

Atar Singh Kalianwala was appointed to expel Naina Singh Nihang who had raised disturbances in the country of Majha and Patti. On hearing the appointment of troops against him he crossed the river Satluj. The Maharaja realized that he would create mischief in British territory. So he immediately appointed Diwan Tara Chand with 700 horsemen and two cannon to capture the Nihang and produce him before him.

Tara Chand met Naina Singh in the village of Hoji on the bank of the river. According to the order of the Maharaja Naina Singh was sent to Amritsar and granted Rs.125.

Village Shaikh

On 8 November, 1835, Akalis created disturbances in the village of Shaikh. The Maharaja "ordered the Daroghas and the platoons to root out the very foundations of their existence, but the Akalis escaped and avoided the troops of the Maharaja on their appearance".

Gifts

On the Sankrant of Maghar, 14 November, 1835, some horses, some cows, and 300 silver ducats were given in charity to the Akalis.

On 15 November, 1835, Hari Singh Nalwa was ordered to arrest the

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Akalis who were about to cross river Satluj in order to create mischief and disturbances.

On 12 January, 1836, Sankrant day, the Maharaja gave away Rs. 3,000 to Nihangs.

On 12 June, 1836, the Sankrant day, Rs. 4,000 were given to Akalis.

Arrears Cleared

In 1836 Jiwan Singh and Kishan Singh, Akali leaders, threatened the Maharaja to pay them their arrears of pay, and he ordered Missar Beli Ram to clear off their dues at once.

Ladha Singh

In 1837, Akalis created disturbances at Amritsar. The Maharaja deputed Ladha Singh with a company of one hundred soldiers and a gun to arrest the culprits and bring them to Lahore. They were severely rebuked and were let off.

A Baoli

In 1837 Akalis took possession of Maulvi Muhammad Khalil's house at Lahore on the plea that there was a *baoli* belonging to the Sikhs in it, and so it was their property. The Akalis opened the *baoli* and named it after Guru Gobind Singh.

Sir Henry Fane

On 19 March, 1837, Durga Singh Nihang beat a man of Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief, with a stick. He was imprisoned in the camp of Gullu Khan. The Maharaja ordered the gate-keepers of Lahore not to allow any Akali to enter the town. If an Akali entered and caused any inconvenience to Englishmen, Rs.1,000 would be deducted from the salary of the gate-keepers.

Maghi

On Maghi day, 11 January, 1838, Rs.1,000 were granted to Akalis.

Lahore

On 19 January, 1838, the Maharaja learnt that Akalis had become a source of disturbance and disorder in the neighbourhood, whereupon Sardar Lahna Singh was appointed with one cannon and 100 horsemen. The Akalis were captured and punished, but the disorders of Akalis and Nihangs did not stop. The Maharaja said that, "they were loafers and

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desperadoes and had received no share of wisdom or intelligence from God."

Bhup Singh Atariwala

In May, 1838, a number of Nihangs left Amritsar to create disturbances across river Satluj. Tara Chand was appointed with 1,500 strong horsemen along with Bhup Singh Atariwala with his six cannon to surround them, and not to allow them to cross river Satluj. They must be made to stay at their places and their expenditure would soon be defrayed.

On 28 May, 1838, a letter from Bhup Singh, commandant of the platoon of Avitabile, Diwan Tara Chand, Mihan Singh a reliable person of Jamadar Khushhal Singh, intimated that they had besieged the Nihangs at Kallowali. The Maharaja remarked that the siege of the Nihangs was not right and the essential thing was to capture them, take away their weapons and then to let them go.

Dinanagar, 4 June, 1838

A letter was issued to Jamadar Khushhal Singh to remove Nihangs from Amritsar to Lahore, and to set up his own camp at Mian Mir.

Osborne, 29 June, 1838

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Englishmen sent in the evening a camel rider with an express letter to Shimla. They were awakened at 3 A.M. The camel driver came covered with blood. He was attacked 11 km away from Lahore, by a band of Akalis and was stripped to the skin. They cut off one of his fingers, took his camel, carbine, pistols, all his clothes and his despatches.

He was sent to the Maharaja. He returned in the afternoon on 30 June. He was given Rs. 100 for his camel, Rs. 100 for his arms and clothes, and Rs. 50 for his finger. He was very well satisfied.

Osborne fell amongst a band of Akalis and had to endure the usual quantity of abuse and blackguardism. He wrote:

> They are, without any exception, the most insolent and worthless race of people in all India. They are religious fanatics, and acknowledge no ruler and no laws but their own; think nothing of robbery, or even murder, should they happen to be in the humour for it. They move about constantly, armed to the teeth, and it is not an uncommon thing to see them riding about with a drawn sword in each hand, two more in their belt, a matchlock at their back, and three or four pairs of quoits fastened round their turbans.

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Ranjit Singh has done much towards reducing these people to a state of subjection, (though they are still very troublesome), by breaking up the large bands of them that were accustomed to congregate in all parts of the Punjab. He has raised some irregular regiments composed entirely of Akalees, which he always employs on any dangerous occasion.

They throw handfuls of musket balls at Ranjit's feet, and abuse and insult him in every sort of manner, frequently threatening his life....

The Maharaj bears it all with the greatest coolness. When they attempt robbery or murder he shows no mercy, and they are immediately punished.

Lord Auckland

The Governor-General, Lord Auckland and his sister, Emily Eden visited the Golden Temple at Amritsar in 1839. He put on dark stockings over his shoes and his sister wore white shoes and entered the Golden Temple without any objection on the part of the Akalis.

Griffin

The steel quoits of Akalis, worn on their turbans, were 6 to 8 inches in diameter. They were thin with a sharp razor like edge. They could hurl it to a distance from 60 to 100 metres.

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CHAPTER 27

Fairs, Festivals and Gardens

Light Side of Life

Ranjit Singh was interested in establishing a cosmopolitan society in the Punjab and to introduce an element of merriment in their humdrum life. For this purpose he wished his people to participate in the country's religious and social fairs and festivals jointly. He set personal example which was emulated by his subjects. The Maharaja, his ministers and noted public men laid out gardens to provide populace common places to meet in daily life to air.

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FAIRS

A fair called *mela* was a form of social gathering. It was one of the best means to relieve the people from the daily drudgery in the fields or at home and it was welcomed by one and all. Most of the fairs were of purely religious character on account of their connection with a shrine or a sacred place. Some fairs were only local and the number of visitors was small.

Certain fairs were attended by people from far off places. Men, women and children, decked out in their best colourful robes, trudged along the road, either on foot or on horses, camels and donkeys or in carts, singing and shouting or giving a merry laugh now and then, as one of the party related some interesting story to beguile the way to the fair. Stalls were set up of miscellaneous merchandise like toys, sweets, fruits, eatables of various kinds, utensils, cloth and other household goods. All these articles were arranged in an attractive and fascinating style. There were swings, merry-go-rounds, acrobats, jugglers, tumblers, wrestlers, actors, singers and dancers. They entertained the multitude with their performances.

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In return they received small coins as their fees or reward. Monkey and bear owners, snake-charmers displayed their skill to get something from the spectators of their own free will. Fidlers, harpers, pipers, drummers and performers on guitar and other musical instruments contributed for the entertainment of visitors. Everybody in the fair appeared full of mirth and merriment.

FESTIVALS

As regards festivals, it is believed that Vishnu Bhagwan settled four chief holidays for the four castes. For Brahmans Rakhi, or Rakhri, or Raksha Bandhan or Solunon in July-August; for Kshatriyas Dasahra in September-October, for Vaishyas or trading class Diwali in October-November; and for the Shudras Holi in February-March. They had economic basis. In June the Rabi crop had been completely lifted from the fields to the home. The cultivators, traders and labourers were all happy having stored sufficient grain till the Kharif harvest was ready. Brahmans could get good offerings from the rest of the community. For new conquests and fresh expeditions winter months were the best period. The Kshatriyas or the fighting class could plan and examine their resources on Dasahra day which marked the beginning of cold season. The Kharif harvest was ready by October, and the cotton and sugarcane crop was to begin. The traders could chalk out their activities for the next year on Diwali day. Winter was a hard-time for the labour class. Its end and beginning of spring in February-March put them in the most hilarious mood, and they expressed it in the performance of Holi.

All the other castes and classes were enjoined to participate in the celebration of these four festivals. Rakhri was marked by sobriety, Dasahra by display of armed strength, Diwali by the glitter of gold and Holi by the unity of country's working class. Three more festivals were added later on. Ram Naumi or the birthday of Lord Rama was celebrated in the beginning of April, Janam Ashtmi or the birthday of Lord Krishna was observed in August-September. Guru Nanak's birthday was commemorated in November.

Festivals also played a dominant part in the life of the people whether living in towns or villages. A festival day was meant for enjoyment at home as well as at the sacred place connected with the particular festival. Every member of the family took bath which was considered an act of merit and a sacred duty. All were dressed in their best clothes. Necessary ceremonies were performed and offerings made to the family deity. In

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some cases fast was observed, otherwise all enjoyed special food prepared at home. The whole day was spent in rejoicings.

The number of fairs and festivals of Hindus and Sikhs most of which were common was fairly large. The Sikh Government encouraged their celebration rallying Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians together and to meet on an equal footing, leading to the development of spirit of unity which did not exist in this country.

Ranjit Singh very well knew that there was only one safe way of insurance against rebellions. It was to create the conviction in the heart of every citizen, however humble, that he was really a partner in the best life which his state could promote.

People of different castes, creeds and religions assembled in a holiday mood, putting aside their differences and prejudices. They developed the spirit of comradeship and fellow-feelings and encouraged religious toleration. This enabled people to think that they belonged to the same mother country and that they were sons of the soil.

The following brief description will show how Maharaja Ranjit Singh developed the spirit of communal harmony through his patronage of fairs, festivals, folk dances and gardens.

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Lohri

Lohri a mid-winter event, was the first festival of the new-year of Christian era. It fell in the first half of January. This festival was peculiar to the Panjab as it was not celebrated in other parts of India. Many days before the festival, boys and girls went from door to door singing a special song collecting a couple of small coins from every place. Even the passersby were not spared. The money thus collected was spent on some eatables significant for this day such as parched rice (*chirwe*) partially boiled with the husk, then flattered and parched, *reori* sweets or small balls of solidified sugar covered with sesame, and *gajak* or *tilwe* of sesame mixed with sugar and *khoya* or milk powder.

At night bonfires were lit. Men, women and children of the Mohalla sat around it. Girls sang and boys danced. All ate their sweets along with parched rice, laughing, joking and story telling. Groundnut was not used in those days.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh observed the festival amidst great rejoicings. His dancing girls performed dances suitable to the occasion. Free drinks and eatables were enjoyed by his courtiers to their heart's content. A couple of entries in Sohan Lal's diary will be found interesting.

On 21 December, 1833 Raja Kalan left for Jammu. He was asked to

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return to Lahore before Lohri celebrations.

On 8 January, 1835, the day of Lohri, suits of clothes were granted to Raja Hira Singh, Raja Suchait Singh, Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Wasawa Singh, Raja Ajit Singh of Ladwa and his two sons, Ratan Singh Gadwai, Kahan Singh Gadwai and to all the staff and servants. Rs. 5,000 were given to Shah Ayub and Nawabs Sarfraz Khan and Zulfiqar Khan, and Rs. 500 to Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh, Maharaja's sons.

On 11 January, 1836 the Lohri day, the Maharaja granted suits of clothes to various chiefs and 11 garments each to Mackeson, Ventura and Kishan Chand.

On 9 January, 1838, the Lohri day Maharaja granted suits of clothes to chiefs, employees, clerks, vakils, and others. Dancing girls, dressed in specially embroidered yellow garments came forward, performed music and dance, and were rewarded.

Maghi

The festival of Maghi falls the next day after Lohri. In Ranjit Singh's time it was reserved for giving alms to the poor, Brahmans and faqirs. At a public durbar he conferred robes of honour on nobles and courtiers.

Sohan Lal, Maharaja's court chronicler says that on 11 January, 1838, suits of clothes and Rs. 1,000 were distributed among the deserving and Brahmans. Maharaja listened to *Granth Sahib*, made an *ardas*, gave 31 suits of clothes, 11 gold pitchers, to be used in gold plating of Hari Mandar, five for Ber Baba Sahib to be utilized by Missar Vir Bhan of Amritsar, Faqir of Nabha, Paryag Brahmans, and Tarn Taran Sahib respectively. One elephant, several cows, Rs. 7,000 and many other things were distributed, and a sum of Rs.1,000 was given to Akalis. Raja Kalan, Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Sardar Dhanna Singh Malwai, Jiwand Singh Mokal and other chieftains presented *nazars*.

Basant

Basant takes place on the 5th day of the light half of the lunar month of Magh (January-February every year. It marks the finale of winter and the advent of spring. It is observed with great rejoicings throughout the country. The face of the earth is adorned with yellow mustard flowers. In those days men and women, young and old, attired in yellow robes from head to foot made themselves merry. Kites were flown and matches were held. When the string of a kite was cut off, the sky echoed with cheers and the shouts of 'Bo-kata' from the winning side. The musicians and dancing girls presented mustard flowers to the rich and men of rank who gave

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them suitable rewards according to their means and status.

A fair was held at the shrine of Madho Lal Husain and the *samadh* of Haqiqat Rae near the Shalamar gardens. The *samadh* of Haqiqat Rae is situated 7 km east of Lahore. The annual fair of Basant was held at this *samadh*. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all attended it in thousands on foot, in carts, on horses, camels, elephants, oxen and in palanquins, according to their means. Dancing girls in thousands entertained the public with music and dance.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh clad in yellow celebrated the Basant festival with great rejoicings. In 1825 the Maharaja gave a sum of Rs. 2,000 for distribution of *karahprasad* to Hari Mandar at Amritsar in honour of Basant. In 1828, the Maharaja ordered the Darogha of excise to provide wine to all the chiefs at their homes in honour of this festival.

The Maharaja visited the fair and reviewing troops reached the Shamiana where he was received amidst loud cheers of "Long live the good liege of the Five Rivers". At first he presented a *nazar* of Rs. 125 at the shrine. Then he sat under a canopy studded with pearls and precious stones, listened to the holy *Granth* for about ten minutes and made an offering to it. The scriptures were then wrapped in ten different covers, the outermost one was of yellow velvet.

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Burnes witnessed this festival on 6 February, 1832. It was celebrated at the shrine of Haqiqat Rae, 4 km from the town. The Sikh troops clad in yellow uniform lined the road on both sides. Then the Maharaja, dressed in yellow robes, and accompanied by Europeans, rode to the tents, all made of yellow silk and adorned with pearls. "Among them was a canopy valued at a lac of rupees covered with pearls, and having a border of precious stones. Nothing can be imagined more grand."

Sohan Lal Suri writes that towards the close of January, 1834, Teja Singh was ordered to ask officers, commandants and Jamadars of the army to prepare yellow uniforms for the Basant day.

On 3 February, 1834, the Basant day, a public assembly was held in the garden of Chhota Ram. All chiefs, officers and senior members clad in yellow clothes, offered *nazars*. Robes of honour were granted to everyone according to rank and status. Ranjit Singh sent money for *ardas* to various gurdwaras.

Sohan Lal's account of the same function is as follows: On 23 January, 1836, lines of horsemen and footmen stood on both sides from outside the Delhi Gate to the mausoleum of Madho Lal Husain, well dressed in fine and special uniforms. At about the third quarter of the day Maharaja rode out of the fort along with chiefs and reached the mausoleum.

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Kharak Singh and Hira Singh sat in chairs. Baron Charles Hugel and Vigne came with Kahlifa Nur-ud-din. Sultan Muhammad Khan and the Nawab of Multan presented *nazars*. Dancing girls danced and sang. They were rewarded. Rs. 3,000 were granted to Nawab Sarfraz Khan and Rs. 3,000 to Shah Ayub.

Baron Hugel attended a durbar held by Ranjit Singh at the *samadh* of Haqiqat Rae on the occasion of Basant on 23 January, 1836. He says the whole population of Lahore was on the road. "I never saw a more singular-looking assemblage." The camels were dressed with collars of shells and little bells, and tails of Tibet cow. Three or four men were sitting on each camel. Eight to twelve persons were seated on each elephant in a howdah. The palankeens were numerous. Large crowds stood round a singing fakir, a juggler or an astrologer, a vendor of toys and sweetmeats. Grown up men were running about the fields with kites. A multitude of persons were seen following some musicians. "All was bustle and mirth."

On the last two kilometres, three regiments dressed in yellow were drawn up on both sides. At the end in two lines stood thirty elephants. The court was divided by a *kanat* or screen. There sat Ranjit Singh in an armchair under a large tent of Kashmir shawls. Everything was yellow. Hugel and Vigne alone were in dark suits. On his right sat Kharak Singh, and on his left Raja Hira Singh. Directly opposite sat Hugel and Vigne in armchairs, and more to the left sat Sultan Muhammad Khan and his son. Behind Ranjit Singh stood Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Suchait Singh and General Ventura.

The most remarkable figure was Zulfiqar Khan, son of Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan. "He entered with a proud bold bearing". He stood for a little while upright and looked about for an armchair to sit. His eyes began to flash. He did not even incline his head before Ranjit Singh. Then two masters of the ceremonies pressed his head down. He then squatted down, like others. "Most of the Mohammedan Sirdars sat with their left hand resting on the ground, their right grasping some weapon, which hung at their girdle and as I watched their eyes sparkling with rage, and their compressed lips, I thought how speedily one cry to arms would have converted this peaceful festival into a scene of blood." "Ranjit Singh asked Zulfiqar Khan to tell something. He narrated a story of his own bravery "without rising". We can imagine Ranjit Singh's wonderful capacity for tolerance.

On 20 January, 1839, the Maharaja ordered that all troops, cavalry and infantry, dressed in red and yellow, should stand in rows from the Delhi

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Gate to the mausoleum of Madho Lal Husain. Tents should be pitched at the last named place. Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh presented 51 gold ducats as *nazar* of Basant. Other big chiefs also presented *nazars*. This was the last Basant observed by the Lion of Lahore.

Holi

Holi is observed on the last day of Vikrami era in February-March. It is marked by joyful singing, hilarious dancing, and sprinkling of coloured powder and water. All business comes to a stop. Children are the first to come in the streets and bazars, armed with bamboo and brass syringes and buckets full of coloured water. After playing laughbable pranks and frolics and painting one another's face, beyond recognition, they occupy strategic points to catch their victims. By midday the celebration reaches its climax. The streets echo with the shouts of 'Holy hai', amidst the beating of drums.

In Ranjit Singh's time the Holi revellers, young and old, Hindus and Sikhs moved about the streets and bazars in groups throwing coloured water or rubbing red powder on every Hindu and Sikh they met in the way. Sometimes a person was drenched with coloured water upto the skin. The troops also indulged in playing with coloured water and *gulal* or red powder and in hard drinks. In the evening bonfires were lit and offerings were made.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh celebrated Holi with great pomp and show. Huge quantities of coloured powder and syringes of gold and silver were collected. Wine and *gulal* were supplied to chiefs and nobles.

The Darogha of Shalamar gardens sent flower twigs to the Maharaja who with trays of sweets offered them to his chiefs and nobles. The Maharaja held a grand durbar on this day. It was attended by nobles from all over the kingdom. All offered *nazars* and received *khilats*. The Maharaja threw *gulal* and sprinkled saffron-coloured water to which rose water had been added on all visitors.

On 13 March, 1813 Ranjit Singh enjoyed the dance of dancing girls and in sprinkling lac dye on the occasion of Holi. On 4 March, 1814, Ranjit Singh sent for lac dye and sprinkled it over his associates and attendants on account of Holi. In January, 1831, letters were issued to the Kardars of Lahore and other places, stating that the Holi day were fast approaching and that they must hurry up in preparing the requisites of the Holi and emphasized that it was an urgent matter.

In February, 1831, Missar Beli Ram was ordered to prepare all the requisites of Holi, like syringes of gold and silver and other things and to

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show them to the Maharaja.

On 24, 25, 26 February, 1831, Holi was celebrated with great pomp and show. All the vakils and chieftains attended it. Lac-dye game was sprayed in great merriment. Everybody was granted a reward in honour of Holi. In the afternoon in the parade grounds the army enjoyed the lac-dye game.

On 1 February, 1832, Khalifa Nur-ud-din was given Rs.1,500 for making preparations for the Holi.

In the beginning of March, 1832, Missar Beli Ram was ordered to give Raja Hira Singh Rs. 500 everyday to meet the expenses of Holi celebration.

A tent was ptiched in the garden of Shah Balawal with great decoration. Dancing girls dressed gorgeously came in. The Maharaja held durbar in the garden of Chhote Lal. They played with lac-dye, sprinkled rose water and saffron water while music and dance of the dancing girl were going on. From 15 to 17 March, 1832 dancing girls remained busy in merriment. All enjoyed the sight of fighting between soldiers of Campoo-e-Mualla in the play of lac-dye. On 17 March in public durbar Maharaja granted to chiefs, nawabs and vakils robes of honour and rewards.

On 25 March, 1834, the Holi day, all the chieftains, Dr. Murray, men of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, Nawab Sarfraz Khan, Zulfiqar Khan, vakils and munshis participated in observing Holi. Such merriment prevailed in the sprinkling of *gulal* that "the surface of the earth and heaven began to look quite red."

Baron Charles Hugel, a German traveller, described the Holi at Lahore in March, 1836, thus: A quantity of Singhara meal dyed yellow, green, red and blue mixed up with little pieces of gold and silver tinsel, was put into large baskets. A number of large pots of water dyed with the same colours and little water-engines were set near them. Everyone appeared in white garments, and the festival commenced by the dancing girls sitting down, and breaking forth into a song in honour of the feast. The baskets of the coloured meal were then introduced and thin glass balls, full of Singhara powder, were distributed to the assembly. They threw them on each other. Broken with the slightest force they discharged their contents on the white dresses and stained them. Like all games of this description, they began gently, but soon assumed a tougher aspect, each player seizing as many balls as he could, and flung them at one another. When the glass balls were exhausted, they took the coloured meal, first as much as the fingers could hold, then by handfulls, and lastly they emptied the baskets over each other's heads, covering the whole person. The dirtiest part of the entertainment consisted in the sprinkling

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with the coloured waters.

Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief, witnessed Holi at Lahore Durbar on 22 March, 1837. He says that in front of every chair there were small baskets heaped one above another. They were full of brittle balls containing red powder. Close to them were large bowls full of thick yellow saffron and long gold squirts. The Maharaja took a large butter-boat kind of article, filled it with saffron and poured on Sir Henry's bald head. At the same time the Prime Minister rubbed him all over with red powder mixed with gold and silver leaves. At this time a long bearded gentleman threw a ball full of red powder which fell into one eye of Sir Henry, just then a young man put saffron soup in Sir Henry's other eye.

Another victim of the day was the Afghan ambassador from Kandhar. A ball of red powder struck his eyes from a distance. Immediately afterwards somebody coloured his beard yellow with saffron. More ammunition struck him. He took to his heels amidst a roar of laughter. Even dancing girls were drenched to the skin.

In the afternoon the Maharaja witnessed the Holi of his troops in the parade ground. In the evening the Maharaja sitting on an elephant passed through the streets of Lahore. He was accompanied by chiefs and women bodyguards riding on elephants. The people splashed coloured water on him from balconies. The people loudly called him *bharwa* and the Maharaja laughed heartily at this abuse. The Maharaja spent about one lakh of rupees on this festival every year.

The chiefs and nobles celebrated Holi in their own homes. Diwan Dina Nath ducked forty of his slave girls in a small tank filled with red water. Among the masses women played Holi in the Mohalla or at home drenching one another in coloured water, and covering their faces and hair with *gulal*.

In January, 1838, the Maharaja ordered Sardar Lahna Singh Majithia, Mian Samadju and Khalifa Nur-ud-din to prepare 600 quintals of *gulal* by everyone of them for Holi.

On 28 February, 1838 a letter came from Nau Nihal Singh that he had visited Jawalaji. He requested for lac-dye for Holi. He was ordered to take Rs.1,000 for the lac-dye from Sardar Lahna Singh Majithia.

On 12 March, 1838, alms were distributed. The Maharaja got busy in merry-making, when earth and heaven became quite red with *gulal*, accompanied by festivities and music of dancing girls. Khalifa Nur-ud-din was ordered to supply 100 *pakka* maunds of *gulal* (red lac-dye) to Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh.

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Hola

Guru Gobind Singh added to Holi another festival called Hola. It was observed on the day following Holi. It was marked by mock fighting and related sports at Anandpur. A big fair was held there which lasted for two days. On the afternoon of the second day, the devotees brought standards from their shrines. They were carried to the neighbouring stream, singing songs and playing on musical instruments. The procession of worshippers clustering round their respective standards moved slowly accepting offerings and bestowing blessings on the devotees. The sight of the multi-coloured standards raised high up was attractive and charming.

The dark standard of Anandpur Gurdwara taken out by Nihangs in dark-blue clothes and conical head dresses encircled with steel quoits was remarkable. Many Nihangs, mounted on horses, rushed wildly about, frantically gesticulating and shouting and posing themselves as defenders of their standard against a supposed foe. Now and then a deep-toned chant rose from one of the groups singing praises of Guru Gobind Singh.

The Sodhis rode on their elephants and caparisoned horses. The gathering assembled on this occasion was huge. In the evening the standards moved slowly towards the town and were carried back as if in triumph to their respective shrines. At sunset the crowd melted away, and the worshippers repaired homewards. Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent a platoon of 50 horsemen to Anandpur to maintain peace and order and to control Akalis.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh took all security measures to keep peace during Holi festival. In 1825 four persons were injured in a riot on the occasion of Holi at Lahore. The Maharaja issued strict instructions to the Kotwal to keep a vigilant watch and to proclaim throughout the city that the disturbers of peace would be severely dealt with.

New Year Day

The New Year Day of Vikrami era falls on the first of Chait in March. The Maharaja celebrated it by giving alms to Brahmans and Akalis. He gave away in charity elephants, horses, suits of clothes, utensils of gold and silver, and various other things.

Rajni Devi Fair

A fair was held at the shrine of Rajni, goddess of small-pox, in Hoshiarpur district, in the month of Chait (March-April). The Hindus and Sikhs gathered there in large numbers, and made their offerings.

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Jawalamukhi Devi

A fair was held twice in the year in the month of Chait (March-April), and again in the month of Asuj (September-October). On both the occasions a large concourse of people assembled there to worship the goddess and to make offerings. The offerings were equally divided between the Raja and the priests.

Solar and Lunar Eclipses

On 12 April, 1828, the day of solar eclipse, Maharaja Ranjit Singh got himself weighed and distributed about Rs.12,000 among the poor. A big fair took place at Thanesar on the occasion of solar eclipse. Thousands of Hindus and Sikhs took a bath in the sacred *sarovar* (tank).

Baisakhi Fair

The Baisakhi fair was held on first Baisakh (April). Men and women took bath in rivers or tanks. It was a day of great rejoicing in the rural areas because harvesting of golden gram and while wheat was to commence from that day. The people moved about in the fair, jumping, dancing and singing. Love songs of Hir-Ranjha, Mirza-Sahiban and Sohni-Mahiwal were sung with wild enthusiasm and zest. Their happiness is epitomized in the following proverb:

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Chana Chait ghana,
Gihun ghani Baisakh;
Aurat ghani tan janiye,
Jai munda howe dhak.
(Gram is ripe in March,
Wheat is ripe in April;
A woman is at her best when
She has a son in her lap.)

This also shows the importance of a male child in agricultural life.

At Lahore the fair was held on the banks of river Ravi. The Baisakhi fair at Amritsar was held amidst great rejoicings and was attended by Sikhs from remote places in thousands who bathed in the holy water of the tank. All Bungas or hospices round the sacred tank and all the semi-religious seminaries were packed to the full by visitors on this day.

In Samvat 1876 (AD 1819) Ranjit Singh spent three months at Multan. On Baisakhi day he offered *nazars* at the shrines of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and distributed money among faqirs and the poor.

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It was on Baisakhi day, 1828, that Maharaja Ranjit Singh conferred the title of Raja Kalan or the seniormost Raja on Dhian Singh. He issued an order that if anyone in future called him Mian, he would be fined Rs. 1000, and if he were not in a position to pay, he would lose his nose and ears. The Maharaja generally celebrated Baisakhi at Amritsar.

In 1831 he gave away dresses and utensils of gold and silver worth Rs. 25,000 at Amritsar on Baisakhi day. On this day, the original copy of the Holy *Granth* was sent for from Kartarpur to Amritsar or Lahore every year. On 11 April, 1831, on the Sankrant day of Baisakh Ranjit Singh visited Durbar Sahib and Dukh Bhanjani Sahib, and spent Rs. 50,000 in charities. On 11 April, 1832, the Baisakhi day, Ranjit Singh made *ardas* at Hari Mandar, Akal Bunga, Garhiali Bunga, Nishan Bunga, and Dukh Bhanjani. He gave away in charity, some horses, one elephant, many suits of clothes, and a *tuladan*, and much cash to the poor and Brahmans. On 11 April, 1836 on the Sankrant of Baisakh 8 gold pitchers and Rs. 15,000 were given away in charity.

On 11 April, 1837, he celebrated Baisakhi at village Udowali during his tour and gave Rs. 7,500 in cash, 2 elephants, some horses, several suits of clothes in charity. On 11 April, 1838, the Maharaja went to Durbar Sahib, threw Rs. 25 into the tank, went to Hari Mandarji, made a prostration, listened to the *Granth Sahib*, made an *ardas*, performed *parkarma* and talked about construction of floor and gold plating of Harmandarji; gave away Rs. 5,000, one elephant with a silver seat, one horse with a gold saddle, 11 gold pitchers. He made the following *ardases*:

Rs. 1,100 at Darbar Sahib
Rs. 500 at Akal Bunga
Rs. 100 at Rababis
Rs. 125 at Jhanda Bunga
Rs. 100 at Dukh Bhanjani
Rs. 100 at Baba Atal
Rs. 100 at Shahid Bunga

At Multan Hindus and Sikhs bathed in the river early on the morning. At midday, dressed in best clothes they went to village Rampur, 3 km north-west of Multan, and spent the day singing, dancing under the shade of trees. Muslims also visited the place and indulged in merriment.

Baisakhi Fair at Katas

Captain James Abbott, Boundary Commissioner, witnessed the Baisakhi

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fair at Katas in 1848. He describes it as follows:

> For the first time in my life I saw whole families together, father, mother, husband, wife and children, all enjoying themselves together without constraint. The women unveiled and drest in their gayest attire, crimson, blue, yellow and white with head ornaments of the purest gold, occasionally with pearls and rubies. These ornaments are often elegant and always becoming to the native face. Few of them could have been worth less than £30 and many must have been worth £100. In no instance did I see a woman or a child on foot, while the male was unmounted; and I observed husbands attending upon their wives and mothers, by a most pleasing reversal of Indian etiquette. Every roof was covered with extempore tents and awnings. Every tree was crowded with gay figures reposing under its shade, and strings of men, women and children were passing along the narrow lanes and alleys, while the water itself was crowded with swimmers and dippers. The faqirs approached them as they bathed and presented their dishes for alms, and no man resisted the appeal. But I observed one who could not otherwise get rid of an importunate beggar, toss the water of the pool into his face.

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About 20,000 people were present in the fair which passed off peacefully without any untoward incident.

Folk Dances

Folk dances have been popular in the Panjab from time immemorial. Folk songs and folk dances represent people's wit, humour, fancy, imagination and romance. They depict the feelings of simple peasantry, and village folk. Most popular folk dances are Bhangra essentially a male dance, while Gidda and Kikli are women's dances. The best performance of Bhangra takes place on the Baisakhi day in every village, town and city of the Panjab. The highest representation of Gidda and Kikli occurs during the festival of Tij or Tiyan.

The Bhangra

The sprightly Bhangra denotes the spirit, vigour and energy of the Panjab. It is accompanied by a song of sheer abandonment, and low drum beats. A young boy dressed as a shy maiden forms the centre of their ballet like movements. The young men dressed in their gaudy dresses and velvet waistcoats with a lovely silken handkerchief in hand surge towards

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the boy in wave after wave of rythmic thrusts. They encircle her. They bend and jump dancing joyfully. Its beat of rhythm indicates vigour of the rural folk and graceful movements of dancers. It is the most colourful folk dance.

The dancers in a vigorous, forceful and breathtaking movements pass through the streets of the village or town. The whole population is out, sitting on the roofs, in the balconies, on walls and trees and perching at every possible place of vantage. They draw general applause and loud peals of laughter of the huge crowd of spectators when the dancers repeat: "*O Natha Singha, Jatti boldi nahin*".

Substance of Young Men's Songs and Dances

We have sown bhang. It has sprouted, grown ankle-high, then knee-high. It has been mown, ground and then drunk. It has gone to our head.

Tiyan or Tij

Tiyan or Tij is a festival of the rainy season. After oppressive heat of May-June come the rains. Nature is beautiful. Dark clouds hover in the sky. Cool breeze blows. Koel coos on a mango tree laden with raw and ripe fruit. The peacock dances in the mango grove. Herds of deer pass by the village jumping and springing. Plants are green. Birds sing and chirp. Cultivators are happy having stored golden harvest of wheat and gram. This festival is exclusively reserved for womenfolk. Men are completely barred from participating in it. They are not allowed even to approach the festival ground. It is held in an open space in the centre of a lane or Mohalla under the shade of a pipal, nim or banyan tree, or outside the village in fields near a mango garden. It begins in the middle of Sawan (July-August) on the third day of the new moon.

This festival is marked by singing, dancing, swinging and merry-making. After a long period of household drudgery and monotony of life, all women, young maidens, damsels, old and middle-aged women covered with finery and jewellery gather and enjoy from 1 P.M. to 6 P.M. for eight days. Gidha and Kikli go on simultaneously. Gossip parties of elderly women indulging in various discussion continue.

Swing: A stout rope is tied to a strong branch of a tree. It hangs down in double fold on two sides. Two girls occupy their seats in this swing opposite each other inter-twining their straight legs. The two sides of the rope are firmly held in hands. A third girl gives a forceful push to one girl sending the other high up. They sing, laugh and cut jokes. All interested take their turn. Swinging is also done while standing in the rope.

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Do din ghut jiwana,
Jiwana matak de nal.

Gidda is a seasonal and ceremonial dance. A woman beats a drum, others gather in a semicircle. They arrange themselves in two groups. One group starts a *boli* or one half of a couplet. The other group recites the second part. When one *boli* is over after great repetition, another *boli* takes its place. It is generally a short song. The couplet is set to music. The young girls dressed in fine clothes of brilliant hues begin to dance Dancing is quick and sharp. The song represents humour, romance, love for parents, brothers and sisters, life at in-laws, economic conditions, longing for ornaments and fineries and separation from spouse.

Kikli is danced in pairs. The music is in full force. Girls in twos holding each other's hands, bending backward, joining their feet, swinging and swirling in fast-motion, sing folk songs.

The women's songs covered almost all aspects of their life. *Sithni* or abusive songs were sung at weddings and mournings. Even *siapa* was done through singing.

Examples of Songs

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1. The moon has arisen after midnight. I am on the roof, I strain my eyes in all directions, but my love is nowhere to be seen.
2. Why don't you recruit only bachelors, O Maharaja? No waiting wives, no sufferings. In what book is it written that married men win victories?
3. Tall and thin is my father-in-law, but fat like a *mugdar* is my mother-in-law.
4. My bridegroom should be as the moon is among the stars or as Sri Krishan is among men. He should neither be too tall to look like a camel nor too short to appear like a stone in the distance. He should be of fair colour and not black. The marriage should take place in October-November, and the marriage party should be big enough.
5. After 12 years you are back home,
 Your earning is a plate of gold;
 I must have sandals decked with stars,
 even though your buffalo is to be sold.
6. After 12 years you are back home,
 Your earning is a blue handkerchief.

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Oh, I can never stay behind,
O, dear, take me alongwith you.

7. After 12 years you are back home
Your earning is a tape,
Mummy, do not send me with him
He will drink my blood.
8. Thy and my life both are fused into one.
In vain in separate body of flesh do we run.

A Hindi-speaking-maiden expressed the pangs of separation from her lover thus:

Jab nile nile ambar par ghanghor ghata chha jati hai,
Aur kali kali badli jab nainon se nir bahati hai;
Us samai pritam mujh par madhoshi si chha jati hai,
Ik dard sa dil men uthta hai aur yad tumhari ati hai.
(When the blue sky is overcast with
Dark clouds which begin to shed tears;
O my love, then I begin to lose my senses,
And feel some pain in the heart at your remembrance.)

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In the Muslim dominated areas such as Multan and Peshawar Tiyan was celebrated in every Hindu and Sikh home individually. Small drum was beaten by a girl. Others began singing and dancing. All women wore fine clothes and jewellery. Gidda was performed by clapping of hands. Swing called *ping* was enjoyed by tying a rope in the ceiling of a big room. It was called *jhula*. Their songs were generally of separation from their beloved, and of the rainy season. In the late afternoon they visited one another's house to compare the quality of the festival with their own. Sweets closely connected with the festival were exchanged. It was observed for eight days.

Accordingly to *Tarikh-e-Wakri*, this festival was observed in Muslim families with great enthusiasm.

Sitla Fair

A fair was held in Sawan (July-August) in honour of Sitla, goddess of smallpox. It was celebrated both by Hindus and Sikhs. The goddess was worshipped and offerings were made. The temple was situated between Lahori Gate and Shah Almi Gate of Lahore.

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Raksha Bandhan

It was known by different names such as Rakhi, Rakhri, Raksha Bandhan and Solono. The festival was observed by Hinuds and Sikhs on the full-moon-day of Sawan (July-August). A *rakhri* made of thin coloured threads or of silk cords was tied round one's right wrist by the sister. It was just an annual reminder to the brother of his duty to protect life and honour of his sister. The Brahmans and priests tied *rakhis* on the wrist of their patrons who offered them some money according to their means.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh observed this festival by visiting sacred shrines, and distributing *karahprasad* among priests and others.

Janamashtami

It was celebrated in the month of Bhadon (August-September) in honour of the birth of Lord Krishna by Hindus.

Dasahra

Dasahra also called Vijay Dasmi was held on the 10th lunar day of Asuj (September-October) in honour of Lord Rama's victory over Ravan. The festival was observed by Hindus and Sikhs alike. The celebration continued for ten days. Sermons from the *Ramayana* were delivered. A theatrical show, called Ram Lila was held with the theme that good triumphed over evil. On the last day of the celebration, the final ceremony of the festival was performed. All decked themselves in their best clothes with green barley seedlings in their turbans. The huge effigies of Ravan, Kumbhkaran and Meghnath were raised up. Then Rama, Lakshman and Hanuman killed them. The explosion of gunpowder filled in the effigies announced the victory.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh celebrated Dasahra with great zeal and zest. All the poor and destitutes shared his bounty, as he showered money with both hands.

The Maharaja held a grand durbar on the Dasahra day. The audience was entertained by dancing girls. The Maharaja and his courtiers were dressed in yellow costumes. The chiefs and nobles presented *nazars* in the form of gold coins, gold butkis, and horses with golden trappings. They were awarded rich robes of honour. Sometimes the Maharaja celebrated the Dasahra at Amritsar. As a rule he launched military campaigns after Dasahra.

On Dasahra day the Maharaja reviewed the entire army, his own as well as of his jagirdars. The review was held on the parade ground situated to the north of Lahore. One side of the ground was covered by

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qanats and *shamiyanas* which accommodated the guests, chiefs and nobles. The Maharaja sat in the upper storey of his silver bungalow. The entire army, cavalry, infantry, artillery, fully equipped with arms on caparisoned horses and elephants passed by him. The band played at the head of each regiment. Behind the band was a *granthi* holding the Holy *Granth*.

In 1827 the Maharaja supplied two *dalis* of fruits and 12 bottles of wine to each of his European officers, one *dali* and six bottles of wine to each of his Sikh chiefs, and 50 bottles of wine to the Akalis as a present in honour of Dasahra. All the chiefs were required to present to the Maharaj on the Dasahra day, 1831, one horse with a golden saddle, and some gold ducats. On 4 October, 1832, the Dasahra day at Amritsar, special suits of clothes were granted to chiefs, commanders, munshis, daftaries, khidmatgars, chobdars, all the staff and servants of the state. All chiefs offered presents. The moon-faced singers threw open the gates of merriment and joy.

In September, 1833, Lala Chuni Lal was asked to tell the *harkaras* to collect *nazars* and presents for the Dasahra day. Letters were issued to Rajas of Punchh and Rajauri, Kulu, Mandi, etc., to Sardars and Kardars of the dominion, that they should send their vakils with ducats, cash and horses with golden saddles to the Sarkar on the auspicious occasion of Dasahra celebration.

On 24 October, 1833, Ranjit Singh went to Dasahra lodge. The chiefs offered *nazars*. Rs. 10,000 were sanctioned for Abchalnagar (Nander). Thirty-six horses of the Dasahra *nazar* were inspected. The salute of the Dasahra day was fired. Rs. 65,000 were distributed among the Charyari troops. One elephant with a silver howdah was granted to the vakil for Shahzada Kamran. One horse, a falcon and some cash were sent by Raja of Bilaspur.

On 12 October, 1834, the Dasahra day, the Maharaja went to the Kotha and held a durbar. All chieftains presented *nazars*, gold ducats, horses with golden saddles. Afterwards all the staff and servants offered *nazars*. Ranjit Singh enjoyed conquest of Lanka by Rama and the Topkhana discharged gunfire. The Maharaja inspected the parade of troops.

On 25 September, 1835, Tej Singh was given 125 maunds pucca of gunpowder for use on the Dasahra day, 1500 yards of cloth for garments, 15 bundles of paper to be distributed in his Topkhana.

On 19 October, 1836, the Maharaja, at the Kotha of Dasahra, at Amritsar performed worship of horse, the sword and the elephant. All

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the chiefs presented *nazars*. The Topkhana discharged gunfire and the conquest of Lanka was enjoyed by all. The parade of horsemen, footmen and the platoons was inspected.

On 11 October, 1837, Ranjit Singh went to Durbar Sahib, made prostration, and offered usual *nazars* at many places. He then went to Kotha Dasahra. All chieftains, army officers, vakils of Raja of Nepal and others, like Shahamat Ali, Bute Shah and Birch, offered *nazars* amidst merriments and enjoyment. The Maharaja visited durbar Sahib and offered Rs. 500 as *ardas* at Hari Mandarji, Rs. 500 at Akal Bunga and Jhanda Bunga and made prostration at these places. At Dasahrawala Kotha chiefs presented *nazars*. A salute was fired. On Dasahra day in 1837, Monsieur Allard offered as *nazar* some gold coins minted in France. On the obverse these coins bore the inscription: "Maharaja Ranjit Singh Bahadoor, the Wali of the Punjab". On the reverse was the picture of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were of the size of Punjab ducats. At Multan men and women gathered in the festival ground in thousands to witness the conquest of Lanka.

Diwali

Diwali meaning a feast of lamps was an important festival of Hindus and Sikhs. It took place on the 14th day of the first half of Kartik (October-November). It was celebrated in honour of Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya after an exile of 14 years. Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, also returned to Amritsar after twelve years' imprisonment at Gwalior on this day. The villagers observed Diwali for two days. The first day was called Chhoti Diwali and the second day as Bari Diwali. On the night of Chhoti Diwali ancestors were worshipped. On Bari Diwali day gala dresses were put on by men, women and children. Sweets, toys, utensils were in great demand on that day. At night all houses and shops were illuminated with earthen lamps placed in rows. Crackers were exploded and fireworks were let off. Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, was worshipped in every home. Sweets were distributed as presents among relatives, friends and menials. The Diwali festival at Amritsar drew Sikhs in thousands from far and near. They bathed in the holy tank. Hari Mandar and other buildings were tastefully illuminated.

Ranjit Singh celebrated the festival amidst great merriments and rejoicings, music and dances. He went about the city to see illuminations and fire works at night. The Kardars were ordered to supply to the poor free of cost oil, earthen lamps, wicks and sweets in large quantities. He visited other cities on this occasion. In 1815 the Maharaja went to Sialkot

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to watch the celebration at the town and cantonment. In 1828, he went to Batala. He distributed Rs. 5 per house among Brahmans and Rs. 4,000 among the poor. On 7 October, 1828, the Maharaja celebrated the Diwali at Lahore. He gave in charity one elephant, one horse, clothes, golden pitchers and Rs. 5,000 in cash. The houses of Muslim officers were as brilliantly lighted as those of the Hindus and Sikhs. Presents of sweets and fruits were exchanged. A sum of Rs. 5 for every regular soldier of cavalry and infantry and a sum of Rs. 2.50 for every trooper of artillery was sanctioned for the purchase of oil for illumination on the Diwali day. On 3-4 November, 1831 while returning from Rupar Durbar the Maharaja halted at Nawanshahar Doaba. On 3 November, the day of Chhoti Diwali, he ordered the Kardars to supply one lakh earthen lamps, three maunds of oil, a large number of cotton wicks and sweetmeats. At sunset the lamps were lit up. All the camps were pitched at Balachau in the territory of Kahan Singh Bedi.

On the morning of 4 November, the Maharaja listened to the recitation from the *Granth Sahib*, made *ardas* and donated one elephant, two horses, ten cows, a few buffaloes, sheep, *sehja*, and suits of clothes. In the afternoon he went to Gunachaur. At night illuminations were held and fireworks displayed. At 10 o'clock in the night he ordered two platoons to go about and see that nobody in the royal camp damaged any fields and crops, and made mischief in any village. In 1832 the Diwali day fell on 23 October. The Maharaja was halting on the western bank of river Jehlam at Jehlam where illuminations took place. As usual suits of clothes, large sums of money, several horses and one elephant were given in charity. On the Diwali day in 1833, at Amritsar, Tej Singh was ordered to announce in the campoo-e-Mualla that none of the soldiers should drink on the auspicious day of Diwali. One by one the companies should go beating their drums to bathe in the holy tank, and should cause no disturbance on the way. On 10 November, 1833, a tent with poles of silver was offered as an *ardas* to Durbar Sahib. It was erected in the premises of Hari Mandar. A *shamiana* and a tent without poles were fixed in the Begam's garden. On the following morning the Maharaja reached Durbar Sahib, made an *ardas* at Hari Mandar and held a public assembly in his own Bunga.

On 31 October, 1834, the Maharaja was halting at Tabtah in Sialkot district on the banks of river Chenab. He granted Rs. 1100 to Raja Hira Singh, illuminations took place at night. Dancing girls engaged themselves in singing and received handsome rewards. Rs. 1100 were given to Baba Sharoon Nath. The Maharaja waded through river Chenab about the ferry of Kalewal and went over to Bajwat and performed ablutions. All

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others crossed the river in boats.

On 21 October, 1835, the Diwali day, the Maharaja entered Durbar Sahib in a boat, made prostration, offered 511 gold ducats for *ardas*, and at Bungas glorious and graceful illuminations were held at night. On the following day of Amavas, 22 October, 1835, he donated one horse, one elephant, a few cows, buffaloes, oxen, and suits of clothes.

On 8 November, 1836, the Maharaja celebrated Diwali at Sialkot in great merriment and enjoyment, with illuminations at night, music and singing of belles.

On 28 October, 1837, the Maharaja was on a tour and celebrated Diwali at village Jalalpur Subatian situated between Chenab and Jehlam rivers. On the Amavas day, 29 October, the Maharaja gave in charity in that village to the poor, Rs. 7,000 in cash, 101 suits of clothes, one horse, one elephant, many utensils of gold and silver.

On 18 October, 1838, the Diwali day, Ranjit Singh gave away one elephant, one horse, suits of clothes, pitchers of gold, Rs. 5,000 in cash amidst illuminations and fireworks at night.

The author of *Tarikhe-e-Wakri* says that on the Diwali day many Hindus spent the night in gambling. Some barren women impelled by the desire of bearing children cut off the hair of a child belonging to another family and burnt it. Some women bathed in the graveyard or at a deserted well in the jungle in the same hope.

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Kartik Asnan

It occurs on Sudi 15 of Kartik. Great importance was attached to it by Hindus and Sikhs. Taking a bath in the river or a tank was considered propitious and of great merit. The Sikhs assembled at Amritsar and took a bath in the holy tank.

Guru Nanak's Birthday

It was celebrated at several places in the Panjab. A fair was held near Pandhari in 1826. A quarrel broke out between some Sikh horsemen and merchants. Five merchants and two Sikh horsemen were wounded, and two shops were looted. The Maharaja punished the offenders and restored the looted property to their owners.

Id-ul-Fitr and Shab-e-Barat

A great fair was held at the shrine of Fatah Shah Sarisht, situated to the south of Budhu's *pazawa* (brickkiln) at Lahore. The Maharaja attended it.

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Bakrid (Id-ul-Azha)

In January, 1811, Qazi Faqirullah proclaimed by the beat of drum in Lahore that all the Muslims should gather in the Badshahi mosque to say prayers. Ranjit Singh entrusted the duty of maintaining law and order to Mushtaq Rae, and the day passed off in peace.

Moharram

The festival of Moharram was observed by Shias with great enthusiasm. Beautiful *taziyas* were exhibited in the streets and bazars on their way to Karbla. In 1825 Ranjit Singh ordered Aflatun, Kotwal of Lahore, to take necessary steps to avert any breach of peace between Hindus and Muslims on the one hand, and between Sunnis and Shias on the other.

Kadmon ka Mela

Kadmon ka Mela was held at the tomb of Sakhi Sarwar near Lahori Gate at Lahore, in the month of February on first Monday after the new moon. Another fair was held at the shrine of Sakhi Sarwar near Derah Ghazi Khan in the month of March. The Sultani Jats visited it in large bodies and returned from there in April. In 1826 at Multan there assembled 5 to 6,000 men to see this fair. A certain Baluchi tribe began plundering the city. Diwan Sawan Mal at once went out at the head of a strong contingent. Three marauders were captured alive, six were shot dead, the rest fled away. Budh Singh Risaldar was put in confinement for neglect of his duty.

Fair of Shah Nur Jamal

Two fairs were held at the shrine of Shah Nur Jamal situated on Dharamsala Road in Hoshiarpur District in the month of Chait (March-April). The first fair was reserved for men and the second for women. A fair was also held on the bank of river Ravi near Lahore.

Fair of Abid Khan Sadozai

This fair was held in the garden of Abid Khan Sadozai at Multan on every Sunday in the months of Sawan-Bhadon (July-September). The Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs gathered there and enjoyed dance and music of dancing girls and sucking delicious mangoes of the garden free of charge.

Nauroz

This was the New Year Day of Iranian Qizalbashes, some of whom

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lived at Peshawar. It was celebrated on 20 or 21 March. The Muslim population of Peshawar spent the day in the gardens. The people moved about in the streets and bazars with nose-gays and branches of peach blossoms. The general belief was that if this day was spent in merry-making the whole year would pass off happily. Ranjit Singh observed this festival with great rejoicings, generally on the banks of Ravi in lovely shawl tents spread with Persian carpets. The Maharaja and his nobles enjoyed wine and dances.

Christmas Eve

The fairs and festivals of Christians in the Panjab were few in number. Christmas Day called Bara Din was the chief festival. On this day great festivities were made by Christians and presents were exchanged among relations and friends. The Lahore Durbar used to send *Dalis* of fruits. sweets and wine to Europeans living in the Sikh kingdom.

GAY GARDENS

There were numerous gardens of flowers and fruits planted at Lahore and Amritsar and other places, either by the Maharaja, or his courtiers and individuals. Most of them were open to the public under certain and strict conditions. They served as meeting grounds for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and developed the spirit for harmonious living.

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Flowers were favoured by all men, women and children who loved to wear garlands. Rose-water and *attar* were extracted from roses. A refreshing beverage was made from *bedmusk* flowers. Chambeli and Motia were greatly liked by all classes of people. The blessings of gods and goddesses could be obtained by offering flowers. They were useful for sweethearting. Flowers were grown in gardens, while lily and lotus grew in ponds.

Fruits

The fruit cultivation was common. Mango was the cheapest and the best fruit. Mangoes were of two kinds: Juicy mangoes were sucked. The others were eaten. Multan was famous for its mangoes. Everyday a number of *banhgis* of mangoes were received by the Maharaja from Multan in the season.

Mulberry or *shahtut* was white and black. Its *sharbat* in summer provided a delicious drink. Gujranwala was famous for its oranges.

Ranjit Singh was extremely fond of flowers and gardens. He planted beautiful gardens at Lahore, Amritsar, Dinanagar, Gujranwala and

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Wazirabad. His example was followed by his nobles and courtiers. Diwan Amar Nath says there were twenty lovely gardens at Lahore. In the manuscript edited by Professor Sita Ram Kohli, Amar Nath gave an account of 12 gardens. Diwan Amar Nath mentions the following gardens in Lahore: Badami Bagh, Baghe-e-Daudi, Dilkusha Bagh, Bagh-e-Shah Balawal, outside the fort near Hazuri Bagh, Habadda Bagh, Khosha Bagh, Chaha Bagh, Bagh Bhai Ram Singh, Bagh Hazrat Faqir Sahib, Baghe-e-Farhat-afza, Bagh-e-Ruhkash Aram, Bagh-e-Diwangan = 12.

Besides these there were gardens at Lahore, laid out by the following persons: Bibi Nakain, mother of Kanwar Kharak Singh, Bibi Sada Kanwar, Moran concubine of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Kanwar Kharak Singh, Kanwar Sher Singh, Bhai Mohan Singh, Bhai Wasti Ram, Jamadar Khushhal Singh, Diwan Mohkam Chand, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Kirpa Ram, Missar Diwan Chand, Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Suchait Singh, Raja Hira Singh, Diwan Dina Nath, Jawala Singh Bharania, Dal Singh Bharania, Sham Singh Atariwala, Himmat Singh, Ratan Chand Darhiwala, Ratan Chand Duggal Wazirabadia, Tej Singh, Chhote Lal, General Ventura, Nawab Sarfraz Khan Multanwala = 26.

Badami Bagh and Hazuri Bagh, located near the Fort of Lahore, were laid out by Ranjit Singh. The gardens yielded mangoes, guavas, oranges, lemons, figs, pomegranates, plums, peaches, grapes, mulberries, apples and according to Steinbach almonds also, "and a great variety of fruits unknown even by name to Europeans." The sale proceeds of mangoes and other fruits in the Dilkusha (soul-stirring) Garden, Lahore, in the year 1826, fetched a sum of about Rs. 4,000. Flowers, fruits, channels of bubbling water, fountains splashing spectators with drizzling drops, the melodious warbles of nightingales, the intoxicating dance of peacocks, the care-free dainty damsels loitering about, laughing, joking and scattering sunshine and serenity everywhere, created a scene of the flight of fancy to paradise. For protection against sun and rain every garden had a *baradari*. All gardens were open to the public under certain restrictions which were strictly enforced.

Lieutenant William Barr says that Maharaja Ranjit Singh had prohibited the cutting off a tree within 40 km of Lahore, and a great scarcity of fuelwood prevailed in the city. This was due to the fact that from 1739 to 1799, during twenty foreign invasions, almost all the trees had been destroyed for 50 km on both sides of the Grand Trunk Road for cooking and warming themselves by invaders in wintry nights.

The famous Shalamar Garden at Lahore had been ruined by the invaders. In the second half of the eighteenth century the Shah Nahar

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which supplied water to this garden had been filled up with silt. It was so overgrown with jungle that it had become haunts of tigers and other wild beasts. Diwan Amar Nath says that Ranjit Singh in 1804 changed its name to Shahla Bagh. In 1806 Maharaja ordered the Shalamar Gardens to be repaired. Ranjit Singh spent liberally to restore them to their former splendour. The Hasli canal was repaired to supply water to these gardens. The channels of running water from an upper level to the lower level in several stages reminded one of the famous poem of Princess Zeb-un-Nisa, the talented daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb, who compared herself with the waterfall in these words:

Ai Abshar nauhagar az bahar-e-kisti.
Chin bar jabin figandah ze andoh kisti;
Aya chih dard bud ki chun ma tamam shab,
Sir ra basang mi zadi wa mi gristi.
(O waterfall! for whom are you bewailing?
What grief is there that you wear wrinkles on your forehead?
What pains thee that like me the whole night,
You strike your head against stone and go on crying and weeping).

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Osborne in 1838 noted that all fountains were playing. Orange trees were in blossom. The gardens had a wall 3 to 4 miles in circumference. Each of the four gateways had a tower. There was a low minaret at each corner. The gardens had orange, pomegranate and mango trees and vines. The gardens had paved stone walks, a canal running through the centre and a square tank in the middle of the gardens. In it several hundred fountains constantly played. A few buildings were in bad shape.

Badami Bagh

Maharaja Ranjit Singh laid out this garden to the north of Lahore Fort. It was named after a certain princess called Gul Badam (Flower of Almond) whose tomb was situated between Masti and Sheranwala gates.

In January, 1836, Baron Charles Hugel, a German traveller, noticed at Lahore that the entire space from the city walls to the banks of the Ravi had been planted with trees which were then in blossom. Here and there existed pleasure houses. The whole area was intersected by canals. It presented "most brilliant, mangificent and imposing spectacle which I had ever beheld in my life."

Diwan Dina Nath's garden was situated on the old road to the Shalamar Gardens, close to the tomb of Ghore Shah, or Horse Patron

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Saint who had manifested his skill in horse riding at the young age of five and opposite the dome of Mahmud Shah. The Diwan's garden was considered a model for beauty, elegance and splendour. It was adorned with reservoirs of water, tanks, splendid summer houses and buildings for the accommodation of visitors. The Diwan enjoyed ducking his forty slave girls in the tank full of rose water.

The garden of Diwan Ratan Chand Darhiwala, outside Shah Alami gate, was beautiful. It was furnished with the buildings, elegant reservoirs and fountains of water and luxuriant walks. It had numerous fruit trees.

From Shalamar Gardens to the city of Lahore, a distance of 8 km the whole space was dotted with pretty gardens. The common people enjoyed morning and evening walks in the gardens. Sohan Lal says these gardens and orchards "attracted the heart and excited the envy of paradise." Lieutenant William Barr in 1839 described the scene in one of the Lahore gardens thus: There were large crowds of people in the evening enjoying fresh air in the numerous gardens outside the city. They were well dressed with one or two pieces of silk. A Sikh artisan was clad in a rich dress consisting of a turban and trousers of yellow silk, and a crimson sheet wrapped round his body. Another man passed by him wearing a *chogha* embroidered with gold, trousers of green silk and a pair of ornamented slippers. "There was here much to remind one of Oriental magnificence, the stately elephant carrying the sumptuous howdah, the prancing war horse with its costly equipment, the glittering arms of the guards attendant on the omrahs, and the rustling silks of the more peaceful inhabitants, carried one back to the days of Bernier whose descriptions of the Mogul's court were considered to have exceeded the truth."

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Ram Bagh

Ram Bagh, now known as Company Bagh also, was laid out by Ranjit Singh at Amritsar. The inspiration was derived from the Shalamar Gardens at Lahore. The construction was started in 1819 under Muhammad Yar, an architect of repute. Faqir Imam-ud-din was appointed to keep an account of the expenses incurred on it. The total cost amounted to Rs.1,45,000, equivalent to today's 50 lakhs. It was completed in 1831 and had seven bungalows. The central one, called Shish Mahal, was magnificent and was built in the style of a baradari or summer-house. It was richly decorated with mosaic work similar to that in the Taj Mahal at Agra. The garden was adorned with a canal, fountains, reservoirs, flower-beds and fruit trees of various kinds. Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to stay in this

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garden during his visits to Amritsar. On the completion of Ram Bagh in 1831, the Maharaja was requested to allow the garden to be called Ranjit Singh Garden. He turned down the proposal saying that the garden should be named after Guru Ram Das, the founder of Amritsar. Another garden, known as Bagh-e-Shish Mahal, was laid out by Ranjit Singh at Amritsar. It was completed in 1834.

Raja Dhian Singh and Raja Suchait Singh built fine gardens at Amritsar in 1831. Hari Singh Nalwa and Samaju contractor for Kashmir goods, constructed beautiful gardens there in 1833, contained a fine summer house. This garden was seized by Prince Nau Nihal Singh after the death of Hari Singh Nalwa. In 1832, Sardar Sham Singh Atariwala laid out a fine garden at Amritsar. In 1834, Jamadar Khushhal Singh and Tej Singh constructed at Amritsar beautiful gardens at a cost of Rs.13,000 each. Spacious gardens were built at Amritsar by Raja Hira Singh in 1835, by Bhai Wasti Ram in 1836, by Pandit Jalla in 1837 (now known as Jallianwala Bagh) and by Lahna Singh Majithia in 1839.

Ranjit Singh's Further Interest

The Maharaja took great interest in the growth of gardens at Lahore and Amritsar. On 6 January, 1831, Khalifa Nur-ud-din informed the Maharaja that he had laid out an orchard in the vicinity of Lahore. The Maharaja ordered the Khalifa on 23 June, 1831, to get all the gardens in the neighbourhood of Lahore cleaned and put in order. On 19 September, 1831, Ranjit Singh gave Rs. 700 to the gardeners for preparing *shagufas* of every kind for gardens and orchards of Lahore, and they would be granted handsome rewards. On 7 November, 1831, the Maharaja went to the top of the Musamman Burj to have a look at the gardens of Lahore through a telescope. The Maharaja visited Kapurthala on 9 November, 1831. He was pleased to see the design of the Raja's garden. He brought one gardener to Lahore to introduce the same plan in the gardens The gardener received Rs. 125 as his travelling expenses.

On 16 January, 1832, the Maharaja visited the garden of Jawala Singh, and ordered for further beautification of blossoms and flowerbeds. The Maharaja visited this garden again on 16 February, 1836. On 20 December, 1838, Maharaja called at the gardens of Shah Balawal, Jawala Singh, Chhote Lal and Lorala(?). "In all the three gardens the young sprouts had made them the envy of heaven."

On 21 December, 1838, Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, admired the Hazuri Bagh "which was like a piece of paradise."

On 23 December, 1838, Governor-General and his party visited

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Taragarh Garden across river Ravi and Jahangir's mausoleum. On the morning of 24 December, 1838, Ranjit Singh went for an outing to the garden of Raja Hira Singh.

On 27 September, 1832, pashmina worth Rs.7,000 was given for laying out new gardens in the neighbourhood of Amritsar. In June, 1833, a letter was issued to Faqir Imam-ud-din and Lahna Singh Majithia to clean up Ram Bagh nicely, put water and sand in the underground apartments, and to fill up all the tanks to the brim, and to make the water of Shah Nahar flow into the Shahla Bagh. On 16 September, 1834, Ranjit Singh paid a visit to the garden of Tej Singh at Amritsar, and remarked that the garden had been laid in the choicest style.

On 20 September, 1835, a letter was issued to Chaudhri Guhi Khan to demolish the wall of the garden of Sardar Sham Singh Atariwala which was near the garden of Guru Sahib and to make it a part of the latter. An order was given to Bhai Gurmukh Singh for the construction of a baradari in the said garden with a grant of Rs. 2,500 for the purpose and to meet the expenses of 25 Granthis for the purpose of *path* (recitation).

Hari Singh Nalwa's Garden at Gujranwala

Baron Charles Hugel was at Gujranwala on Friday, 8 January, 1836. He was received with a present of 25 plates of sweets and a dozen baskets of fruits. Every room in the palace was hung and covered with the richest carpets of Kashmir and Kabul. "The splendour of the rooms in the palace did not excite my admiration nearly as much as the garden, which was the most beautiful and best kept I had seen in India. The trees were loaded with oranges, of the same kind known in China as Mandarin oranges, but much larger and finer, here called the Santreh orange. Hari Singh has also transported the plane-tree from Kashmir, which seems to flourish exceedingly well in its new locality. An odour almost overwhelming ascended from the jonquils, which were in immense abundance, and of an incredibly large size. Nothing, in fact, could be more carefully adorned with lovely flowers and plants of various kinds, than this garden, which evidently formed one of the chief delights, and sometimes the occupation of its owner."

Batala

Khalsa Sher Singh presented 11 gold ducats on 18 April, 1838, and requested the Maharaja to visit the gardens in the suburbs of Batala which were in full bloom at the time. On 12 June, 1838, Maharaja stayed in his garden at Kalanaur.

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Dinanagar

Gardens at Dinanagar, Maharaja's summer capital, had beautiful trees of various kinds. A canal, taken out of Shah Nahar, flowed rapidly by the town and a lovely garden of pomegranates.

Multan

Shortly after the conquest of Multan in 1818, Ranjit Singh sent Azim *baghban* from Lahore to Multan to repair the five famous gardens and to lay out new gardens. Nawab Sarfraz Khan, a pensioner of the Maharaja, laid out a fine garden at Multan.

The Gheba Chief's Garden at Village Kot

Alexander Burnes saw a lovely garden in 1832 in village Kot situated on the Fatahjang-Kalabagh road in Attock district. It belonged to the Gheba chief Rae Muhammad Khan. This garden contained numerous fruit trees of almonds, apples, apricots, belyber (jijube), cardamom, dates, figs, grapes, greengage, guava, jaman, lemon, lime, mango, pomegranates, and quince. The pathways in the garden were lined with beautiful cypresses and weeping willows. The flower beds had nurcissus and roses. A Kashmiri was the gardener.

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Comment

Fairs, festivals and strolls in well-laid out gardens gave relaxation in the monotonous life to women and children in particular and to men in general. Some fairs were purely local, while others attracted visitors from far and near, and lasted for more than one day. There were many festivals in the year, meant for all castes and classes. They afforded enjoyment to all at home as well as at the sacred places associated with them. A stroll in the evening in a garden added salt and spice to life to make it pleasant and worth living. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, all met in a hilarious mood, and enabled them to develop spirit of comradery and companionship. Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave every possible encouragement to his people to rub shoulders with one another in a cheerful frame of mind with a friendly nod.

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Part Five

Economic Prosperity

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CHAPTER 28

Development of Agriculture

The Panjab was mainly an agricultural country. Its soil was fertile and productive. Cultivation was carried on by primitive methods. Crops mainly depended on rain. Bunds and dams were constructed to raise water to the level of surface. The Persian wheel and charsa were in common use. The chief products were wheat, ram, maize, mustard, sugar-cane, rice, cotton, hemp, indigo and opium. Ranjit Singh greatly developed agriculture because his revenues depended upon it and because he belonged to the caste of cultivators.

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The Peasant Population

About 90 per cent of the peasantry was centred in rural areas, and nearly 10 per cent in towns and cities. The peasantry in villages consisted of four-fifths of population, and in towns and cities to about one-tenth. Hence the total population of peasantry in the Panjab may be put at 20 lakhs or two-thirds of the total population.

The Jats

The Jats formed the backbone of peasantry. The Jats were either Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus. In West Panjab they were mainly Muslims, in Central Panjab Sikhs, and in Eastern Panjab Hindus. The Muslim Jat was far inferior to the other two as an agriculturist. According to Ibbetson, he was lazy, devoid of industry and thrift. His main characteristic was false pride–*Pidram sultan bud*. The Sikh Jat was by far the best agriculturist of the three. His love of money and keenness to enjoy a good life spurred him to exertion. He was a husbandman from the womb. The Jat's baby had a plough-handle for a plaything. The Hindu Jat was not so diligent and hard working or "self-reliant as the Sikh; but he was decidedly

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superior to the Muhammadan", writes Ibbetson.

Kambohs

After Jats the Kambohs were the finest cultivators. They were found in the upper Satluj valley down to modern Montgomery district.

Rajputs

Another class of cultivators in the Jalandhar Doab and Riarki was that of the Rajputs. They were mainly Muslims and were called Ranghars. They were "decidedly inferior in physique, industry and thrift to the Jats". The Rajputs both Hindu and Muslim observed four maxims: not to plough land, not to give their daughters in marriage to those who belonged to inferior castes, not to accept money for their daughters, and to keep their women in strict purdah. He could give land to others to cultivate for him.

Brahmans

Brahmans looked upon ploughing as degrading. A Brahman who ploughed was called *Halbaha* or cultivator. He was regarded impure.

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Vegetable Growers

Besides the cultivators who raised cereal crops, there were vegetable growers. They formed a separate group from those who pursued agriculture as their main occupation. The cultivation of vegetables was looked upon as degrading by the agricultural class. The Arains, Malis and Sainis were vegetable growers on a large scale, particularly potatoes and onions. They followed agriculture on a very small scale. Arains were found in the north-western parts of East Panjab, particularly in the districts of Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Amritsar and Lahore. They were all Muslims. A proverb says:

Je tu banda Sain da,
Basah na karyo Rain da.
(If you believe in God, put no trust in an Arain.)

A Mali was generally a market or nursery gardener. He was found mostly in towns and cities where manure was abundant and great demand for his produce. He was a skilful and industrious cultivator. He produced 3 or 4 crops in a year in the same field. In the Yamuna zone he was called Mali and in the eastern sub-montaine districts Saini. He flourished

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mostly along the foot of the hills between the Yamuna and the Ravi. He was always a Hindu. They were all celebrated for thrift and businesslike habits.

Role of Women in Agriculture

The women, Hindu and Sikh, contributed a good deal to the economy of the household. Man ploughed the fields, harrowed and sowed and threshed corn. Women took breakfast to the fields. They crushed clods, put manure, hoed and weeded. They kept a watch over crops. They mowed ripe crops, gathered millet and maize, picked cotton, collected fuel. At home they milked cows and buffaloes and made ghi. They served as *dais* or mid-wives. A Jat woman gave rise to the following saying:

Changi ran Jatti,
Hor sab chatti

The women of Arains, Sainis and Giyars also did a lot of field work. In rice-growing areas women transplanted the seedlings (*paniri*) in the sloppy mud.

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Condition of Agriculture

Starting from the north-west, Hazara was a mountainous country. Its name was derived from a thousand hills, big and small throughout. There was little agriculture. Sind Sagar Doab was the least cultivated. It was the least populous part of the Panjab. It was called ocean of the Indus river due to annual inundation to which it was subjected. In the centres of the Chaj, Rachna and Bari Doabs there were large tracts where pastures abounded. There cattle-lifting was the normal crime. The profession of cattle-stealing was looked on as honourable. In these pasture-lands there were ample means of practising this trade, and allied pursuits. Khojis followed the traces of stolen cattle through prickly jungles and over hard clay with great perseverance and ability. In the lower parts of the Bari Doab, the population was thin, and brushwood and jungle covered the country for miles around. Majha and Jalandhar Doab were inhabited by the Sikhs. About the Jalandhar Doab it was recorded that in its whole length and breadth there was "nothing but one sheet of the richest cultivation".

Baron Charles Hugel, the German traveller, described the condition of Ranjit Singh's Panjab in 1836 thus: The country between Attock and Rawalpindi received little rainfall. Agriculture depended almost exclusively

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on irrigation which did not exist. Hence the country in many parts was a wilderness, "producing nothing except stunted acacias and the ziziphus". The land about Gujranwala was "poorly cultivated". "The nearer one approahces the Ravi, the more desolate and uncultivated is the country about it". Twelve km from Lahore towards Amritsar land was desert, but close to Amritsar it was finely-cultivated. The region between Amritsar and Kapurthala, 64 km, was well under cultivation. The tract from Kapurthala to Jalandhar was richly cultivated. From Jalandhar to Phagwara, the whole area was covered with green fields and gardens.

It may be pointed out that Hugel travelled along the Grand Trunk Road, and his observation was confined to a little distance on both sides of the road. This territory had been under the heels of the invaders upto 1799, and the same fear held a firm grip on the minds of the ryot as well as the rulers, and it was deliberately left uncultivated. After 1767, no invader had gone beyond Amritsar, and so the peoples' minds in this area had been free from this danger.

Jagirs

Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted jagirs to his courtiers, favourites, and officers for life of the grantee. Certain areas of the country or Parganahs, or groups of villages or parts of a single village were given in lieu of military service on demand for a fixed number of well armed, well equipped and well mounted soldiers. At the death of the person the jagir along with all cash and valuable movable property were resumed for the state. This policy checked corruption and ill-treatment of cultivators by the jagirdars. For failure in loyalty and inefficiency a jagir could be resumed at any time during the life-time of the jagirdar. The jagirdars were frequently fined heavily and imprisoned for not fulfilling the terms strictly.

Prosperity of Peasantry

The main source of income of the Sikh State was land revenue. Himself having been a zamindar the Maharaja clearly saw the advantages of good government. Consequently, he treated the husbandman and farmer with great regard and tenderness.

If the village community paid all their taxes voluntarily or on demand easily, and kept cultivation in a high state of prosperity, the kardar never interfered with it and left it to manage its own internal affairs. On the other hand he helped them to maintain their organization in an efficient state.

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Soil

Agriculture depended to a large extent on the nature of the soil, seed, rainfall and irrigation. Excluding the Himalayan and other hilly tracts and the ravines of Attock, Rawalpindi and Jehlam districts, the vast alluvial plain was broken only by the wide valleys of its rivers. Its soil was sandy loam, interspersed with patches of clay and tracts of pure sand. In the hilly areas sand and clay were rare, and the land was largely stony. There were chiefly half a dozen of varieties of soil in the plains of the Panjab:

1. *Gora*: The soil around villages and wells was called Gora. It was highly manured and grew the best crops.

2. *Rohi*: It was the finest natural soil, a stiff clay, dark or reddish dark in colour. It broke up in clods and was most productive. It did not require manure, and was best suited for wheat and rice. It was chiefly found in low-lying areas along drainage channels and around *chhambs*.

3. *Dosahi or Missi*: It was a fine clayey soil with an admixture of sand. It did not require irrigation.

4. *Maira*: A loose loam with less clay than sand and varying much in quality was called Maira. It was most suitable for the cultivation of *moth*, *mung*, and *til* (sesame).

5. *Tibbe*: In it sand largely preponderated. It was very poor soil on which irrigation had little effect. With rains it grew good crops of barley, *moth* and *mung*.

6. *Kallar*: It was sour and barren clay. It was not productive. If irrigated, it could produce rice.

For the purpose of assessment and fixation of land revenue the following classification was adopted.

1. *Abi* was irrigated from pond or tank.
2. *Barani* depended on rainfall only.
3. *Chahi* was irrigated by a well.
4. *Nahri* was irrigated by a canal.
5. *Sailabi* was inundated by river flood.

The Panjab rivers often changed their courses, rising and receding, and leaving a vast expanse of loam which was fertile and needed no irrigation.

Seed

Every cultivator took care to put seed of superior quality into the soil.

Rainfall

The northern half of the Trans-Indus region got rainfall from 13 to 18

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inches in the year, and the southern parts from 6 to 8 inches. Hazara mountains had 46 inches. The northern half of Cis-Indus or West Panjab received from 12 to 33 inches, and the southern half from 6 to 7 inches. The upper parts of Central Panjab got 24 to 35 inches and the lower parts from 10 to 21 inches. Kangra hills received the heaviest rainfall, about 125 inches, and the Jalandhar Doab from 28 to 36 inches.

(These figures pertain to the beginning of the twentieth century, but they can easily be accepted for Ranjit Singh's Panjab with little variation.)

Irrigation

A greater part of the Panjab depended on rains. Wells, springs, ponds, river channels, and tanks were all harnessed for irrigation in one or the other part of the country. Wells were the chief means of irrigation. They were either kachcha or pakka. The kachcha wells had no brick work. They were found in the low lands near a river, and they lasted for about two years only. They lasted longer where clay was strong and tenacious. A pakka or masonry well was worked by means of a Persian-wheel called *rahat*. It was in general use. From three to five pairs of bullocks were required to work a well continuously for twenty-four hours. At least two men were needed, one to drive the bullocks and the other to divert the water into the fields. At some places *dhingli* was in use. Men's hands were often cut by lowering and raising it again and again. It was employed in shallow wells. In deep wells Charsa was in practice. It was generally worked by bullocks.

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Canals

Peshawar Region

In Peshawar district there were four canals:

1. *Katha Shaikh*: It supplied water to Peshawar city and converted it into a green garden with numerous orchards giving a plentiful supply of flowers and fruits.

2. *Budni Canal*: It was taken off from river Swat to irrigate Hashtnagar tract where sugar-cane and grain were grown in abundance.

3. *The Swat Canal*: Another canal, taken off from river Swat, irrigated Charsadda region where rice and sugar-cane abounded.

4. *Kalpeli Canal*: It irrigated 22 villages of Hoti-Mardan for the production of grain.

5. At Zor a canal, called Lukh, was cut out of the bed of the Indus. It issued forth in four streams, namely, Jhakri, Thalwala, Sanwah and

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Sardar. They were lost in the cultivation which extended plentifully up to Quraishi.

Derah Ghazi Khan

Fourteen inundation canals were taken off from the western bank of river Indus. They irrigated 1,374 square miles of area.

Leiah and Khangarh

There were some hundreds of miles of cuts and minor canals in the districts of Leiah and Khangarh. In the district of Khangarh alone there were 560 km of such works, excavated by zamindars, kardars, and cultivators.

Multan

Diwan Sawan Mal was the governor of Multan from 1820 to 1844. During his administration thousands of masonry wells for irrigation were sunk. Thereby he converted a desert into a fertile, cultivated region. His revenue reforms were based on the principles of low taxes, moderate assessment, and reduction in extra charges imposed on the cultivators. He made judiciary strict and impartial, and gave personal attention to all the business of state. The province of Multan came to be called Dar-ul-Aman or the abode of peace and plenty. Griffin writes:

> "He turned what was a desert into a rich cultivated plain". O'Brien, the first land settlement officer after annexation in 1849, stated: "Diwan Sawan Mall's government was better than anything that had preceded it."

In the Multan province the following inundation canals existed:

1. *The Khanwah canal:* It irrigated both Multan and Gugaira districts.
2. *The Diwanwah:* It was 64 km long and navigable for country boats for 32 km.
3. *The Sardarwah:* It was 64 km long and navigable for 40 km. It irrigated the Parganah of Kahror, generally for the cultivation of indigo.
4. *Bahawalwah*: It was taken off from river Satluj at village Fatahpur. It irrigated the area of Kokur. More than 800 jhallars worked on it.
5. *Sikandarwah*: It was taken off from river Chenab, and irrigated the tracts of Sikandarabad, Nawabpur and Chhajju Shah. It had 140 jhallars.
6. *Shahpur Canal*: It was taken off from river Chenab and went up to Multan. It watered the area called Sital di Mari. It had 170 jhallars.

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7. *Mian Channu Canal*: It was taken off from river Ravi, and irrigated the Parganah of Mian Channu. It was 55 km long.

8. *Sidhani Canal*: It was taken off from river Ravi at Chauntra of Ramchandra and Lachhman. It was 72 km long.

9. *The Muhammadwah (heroes of Ramayana):* It was 60 km long and navigable for 20 km.

10. *The Wali Muhammadwah:* It was 70 km long. By it boats from the Chenab could reach Multan.

The old system of clearing these canals existed. Under a revenue officer, a panchayat of zamindars assembled. It decided on the number of labourers called Chirs. Each village had to furnish either labourers or a money payment at the rate of eight annas an acre. No water rate was charged. The state was compensated by the increase of cultivation.

It was a wonderful achievement of a single chief of great talent and energy, able and effective, with a good staff of subordinates.

Gugaira (Montgomery) District

The Khanwah canal was cut off from river Ravi in the reign of Shah Jahan. Its bed had been silted up at many places. It was improved by Sawan Mal. It greatly benefited Gugaira district.

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Sialkot

Near Wazirabad and Sialkot some old cuts and water-courses were used for irrigation.

The Hasli Canal

The Shalamar Gardens at Lahore, the birthplace of Shah Jahan, were laid out under his orders by Ali Mardan Khan, viceroy of the Panjab. To irrigate them a canal was taken off from river Ravi where it entered the plains from the hills. It was called Shahi Nahar or Hasli canal, as its course resembled hasli, a silver ornament for women's neck. It was dug out in 1633 during the time of Guru Hargobind. The government had no philanthropic motive, neither to increase land revenue, nor to reclaim any wasteland, nor to create new villages. It crossed only two torrents. Its supply was about 200 cubic feet per second. Its banks were lined with trees and rich cultivation. After crossing the Chakki stream, it flowed by Dinanagar and Majitha. At Majitha Ranjit Singh cut off a branch from this canal to Amritsar, 20 km off, to supply water to the holy tank of Durbar Sahib. The people of every village along its course dug their portion free on account of its sacred nature. From Majitha the canal

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passed by Raja Sansi and Pul Twaif, and entered the Shalamar Gardens after covering a total distance of 180 km. Its width varied from 20 to 40 feet and its depth from 1 to 4 feet.

The chiefs and courtiers whose lands and gardens were situated along its course, were allowed to irrigate them from this canal. A second line of the canal once operated from Batala following a natural nullah to Kasur. The canal could irrigate 70,000 bighas of land and was assessed at the rate of Re. 1.00 per bigha. But due to dishonesty and fraud of the canal establishment the total revenue was Rs. 26,000 only. Lahore was supplied water by another canal also. It was taken off from river Satluj opposite Gandasinghwala village near Firozpur.

Wells

Well irrigation was common in Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Sialkot and Gujranwala districts. The pakka wells were in many cases joint property of a number of zamindars who used them by turns. They were worked by Persian-wheels. Missar Rup Lal in Jalandhar Doab and Sawan Mal in Multan province encouraged cultivators to sink wells. They gave loans and reduced land revenue for some years as an incentive. The total number of wells in Ranjit Singh's reign was 1,36,638,53. Persian-wheels were popular near river banks in central and western Panjab.

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Bandhs

In hilly regions water for irrigation was stored after the rains by making a bandh to control water of a stream.

Kulhs

Kulhs were small water channels cut off from a stream to irrigate fields and to work petty flour mills called *gharat* or *panchakki* to grind corn. They were common in lower Shivalik hills and in the submontane regions in Kangra, Hoshiarpur and Ambala districts.

Jhallar

A Jhallar was in vogue on the high bank of a river or a tank, in an area where water was available at about 5 or 6 feet below the surface. A kachcha well, almost a pit, was dug up. A large bucket of leather had two ropes tied to its edge opposite each other. Two men stood on the bank on opposite side. They threw the bucket into the water. When it was full, they raised it up with a jerk and pushed the water out on its bank. It was carried to the fields in a narrow channel.

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Duties levied by Govern...ent

The following duties were imposed by Government: For canal water, Rs. 2 per acre annually, for a jhallar, Rs. 12 a year, for kulhs just a couple a rupee per annum, for a well Rs. 9 yearly, and for navigation nominal duties were charged from traders.

The canals were repaired every year in dry weather, the expenditure was borne by the State and the zamindars half and half. Sir John Malcolm who was at river Beas in 1805 in his *Sketch of the Sikhs* writes: "In no country, perhaps, is the Rayat, or cultivator, treated with more indulgence".

Captain Mathews who travelled in the Panjab in 1808 observed:

> "The cultivators are assessed to the amount of one half of the produce of their crops, which is paid in kind to the chief, as money currency is very limited throughout the Panjab. Although that is the general rate of assessment, yet every allowance is made to the cultivator for unfavourable seasons, and every species of oppression carefully guarded against by the chief, who, is beloved and revered by his people, whose happiness he studies to promote".

Cattle

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Next to land the wealth of the peasantry consisted of cattle. Oxen to till the land and to drive a cart and cows or buffaloes for milk and ghi were kept almost by every peasant. Gujars reared cows and buffaloes. A shepherd kept sheep and goats. The central part of West Panjab was mostly a bushy jungle or a pastoral wasteland called Bar.

There were no veterinary hospitals. Every village had its own grazing ground. The cattle grazed there from morning to evening under the supervision of a cow-herd.

Gujranwala, Jhang and Multan had reputation for bullocks. The Majha oxen were fine. The bullocks of Lakhi Jungle enjoyed good reputation. Buffaloes were highly prized. They yielded more milk and ghi than cows. Male buffaloes were used for heavy cartage. Horses and ponies, though found everywhere were most numerous in Majha. The Baluch and Dhanni breeds were the best known in the Panjab. The horses of Lakhi Jungle were greatly valued. Camels were used for riding and as beasts of burden in the desert regions. They tilled land and worked the Persian-wheel. They were common in south and south-west Panjab.

Sheep and Goats

Dumba or fat-tailed sheep was found in the salt range. Ram fight was a

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good amusement for the people. Steinbach says:

> "Camels are numerous; buffaloes and sheep are found in large herds and flocks". He further writes: "The Sikhs are extensive breeders of horses, in which they take great pride".

Arboriculture

The forests were of two kinds, of the plains and in the hills. In the plains there grew dhak, farash, Jand, karir, kikar, shisham or tahli, van, etc. The sal tree was found in the sub-montane tracts in the Kangra hills. The rocky hills of the salt-range were covered with phulahi. In the low Shivalik hills bamboo and chir forests were found everywhere. There was fine timber all along the foot of the hills. In Leiah district there was a dense wood 20 km long and broad. Numerous islands in the Indus were clothed with fine forests. The people obtained from the forests drugs, dyes, fruits, timber, fuel and fodder.

Himalayan Forests

There were magnificent forests in the Himalayas. Deodar was found in high mountains from 5,000 feet to 8,000 feet. There were also pines, elm, plane, walnut and chestnut trees. The trees in the hills were cut in April, May, June, and again in September. It was a difficult task to convey the trees and timber to the rivers. A tree which was 30 feet long and 15 feet in circumference was hurled 1,500 feet below from a precipice. It lost all its branches and nearly one half of its trunk before it reached the bed of river Ravi.

Cost of Living

The amount of food daily eaten by each person varied with age, sex and season. The estimate given in the *Sialkot Gazetteer* was:

> Taking a zamindar's family to consist of six persons,–that is, father, mother, son, wife and two children,–it may be said that each male adult ate 1½ kg, the women 1 kg and each child ¾ kg of grain a day, while 1½ kg of pulses were consumed by all five jointly. Thus each family consumed 8 kg of grain every day, or 72 maunds (28 quintals) in one year.

As regards clothes, a man got through two suits a year, and a woman or child through one. Thirty metres of cloth sufficed to make up a

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complete suit of male clothing, and 20 metres a set of a woman's clothes, while 10 metres were enough for a child. One family, according to this estimate, required 180 metres of cloth every year.

Shoes for the family cost about three rupees and bed clothes about eight rupees a year. Thus the necessary annual expenses of a family were 28 quintals of grain, 160 metres of cloth, which represented about 60 kg of unginned cotton, and disbursement of grain of the value of Rs. 21. This estimate did not include any luxuries or the food of the cattle.

Prices in 1808

Captain Mathews was at Phagwara on 27 April, 1808. He noted the following rates of articles per rupee:

Wheat flour, one maund	40 kg
Barley, one maund 10 seers	50 kg
Gram, one maund	40 kg
Moth, one maund	40 kg
Mung, 35 seers	35 kg
Urd, 35 seers	35 kg
Gur, one maund 15 seers	55 kg
Rice, 20 seers	20 kg

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Good camels were procurable at Amritsar in great numbers at 50 rupees each.

At Lahore *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* says that in March, 1834, wheat at Government stores was being sold at 17 kg to the rupee. The shopkeepers were selling it at 13 kg. The Bazar Chaudhris were directed to see that the shopkeepers should not sell it less than 16 kg for a rupee. The defaulters would be heavily fined and their noses would be cut off.

At Peshawar in 1834 per rupee

Wheat	30 kg
Barley	45 kg
Bara rice	4 kg
Sheep	Rs. 2 per head
Bullock	Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 per head

At Rawalpindi in 1837 per maund (40 kg)

Tobacco	Rs. 2 to 4
Alum	Rs. 5
Soap	Rs. 3/50
Saffron	Rs. 8

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Oil	Rs. 3/62
Molasses	Rs. 4
Wheat	Re. 1/36
Pulses	Re. 1/66
Cotton	Rs. 11/50
Salt	Re. 1/75
Almonds	Rs. 12

Prices in general, 15 May, 1839

Horse	Rs. 40
Buffaloe	Rs. 10
Sword	Rs. 2
Camel	Rs. 25

In Panjab, between 1830 and 1840 per Nanakshahi rupee in maunds, seers and chhatanks, B.J. Hasrat in his *Life and Times of Ranjit Singh* gives the following schedule:

	Wheat	*Barley*	*Jawar*	*Gram*	*Gur*	*Cotton*	*Rice*
Lahore	1-0-0	2-2-0	1-9-4	1-0-10	0-19-3	0-4-0	0-8-4
Amritsar	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Multan	1-11-6	1-27-12	1-39-2	1-2-9	0-15-1	0-4-3	0-12-0
Firozpur	1-1-10	1-36-0	1-26-10	1-9-4	0-17-13	0-5-0	0-12-2

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G.T. Vigne says that a poor man in Panjab could live on Rs. 3 monthly. In England the cost of the same foodstuff eaten by a Panjabi peasant was 6 to 8 times higher.

Professor Sita Ram Kohli estimated that in Kashmir the expenses of the same foodstuff or rice were Rs. 2 Harisinghia a month or Re. 1¼ Nanakshahi.

Baron Charles Hugel in 1836 calculated that the family of a labourer consisting of four members could live on nine annas or 56 paise of today.

Comment

Though Ranjit Singh ruled as a despot, yet he was held in high esteem on account of his moderation and justice. In fact he was beloved and revered by his people, whose happiness he always strived to promote.

According to Morris' testimony the land revenue system adopted by the Sikhs appeared 'to have been wonderfully successful in promoting the extension of cultivation in a tract which, prior to the period of Sikh rule,

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was practically uncultivated waste inhabited only by pastoral and nomad tribes".

The government performed the functions of a landlord. They helped in repairing and constructing wells. Cultivators were given concession in cases of droughts, famines, floods or epidemics both among men and cattle.

G.W. Forrest, the biographer of Field Marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain in November, 1838, made the following observation about the British territory in the Cis-Satluj region:

"The march of the columns was through the Company's Sutlej States, and the country is described as very desolate, 'no cultivation seen except near the villages, which are twelve or sixteen miles apart'."

Denzil Ibbetson says that in East Panjab under the British famines occurred in 1812, 1817, 1824, 1833, 1837, 1841, 1842. It goes to the credit of Ranjit Singh that due to his encouragement of irrigation no famine took place in the Sikh kingdom. According to John Lawrence "the whole country was under cultivation".

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CHAPTER 29

Growth of Industry, Trade and Commerce

A. INDUSTRY

The most urgent need of the time was to meet the requirements of the Army. Swords, guns, bullets and cannon were manufactured in state foundries. Lahna Singh Majithia, notable mechanical engineer, was in-charge of this department. Leather industry provided saddles and other equipment of cavalry. The soldiers were dressed in silk of Multan and shawls of Kashmir. Maharaja Ranjit Singh spared no pains to encourage industry not only useful to the army but also to the masses. A brief reference is made here to some of the handiwork done in the Panjab in those days.

Industrially the Sikh kingdom was quite developed. The important industries were arms, textiles and Kashmir shawls. Ranjit Singh considered shawls to be the finest product of his kingdom. Shawls were always included in his presents to European and Indian high dignitaries.

The Hindu and Sikh women rendered great help in the industrial sector. They were engaged in ginning, spinning and weaving. They manufactured khaddar, blankets, khes, pattus, niwar, daris and phulkari.

Arms

Arms were manufactured in the Panjab at several places, but particularly in the village of Kotli Loharan in the Sialkot district. Iron was imported from Mandi and Peshawar. The Mandi iron was of sand-stone formation. It was ductile, pure and soft. Arms made of it were considered the best in India. The matchlocks prepared at Kotli were in great demand. The Kotli barrels were superior in strength and beauty to others. The price of the best unornamented barrel was about Rs. 15 or 30 shillings. Swords, daggers, jamdhar and guns were made at Lahore and Gujrat. Koftgari or

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inlaying arms and weapons with gold or silver wire was also practised at these places. This art was confined mainly to decoration of arms and weapons of warfare. Lahna Singh Majithia cast many guns of great quality. Rae Singh was a notable gun-maker. He cast the famous gun named Nusratjang in 1831. James Browne noted in 1788 that the Panjab was famous for the best arms in Hindustan.

Brass and Copper Wares

Hindus used brass vessels, while Muslims used copper vessels. The chief centres of their manufacture were Gujranwala, Lahore, Jagadhri, Panipat, Delhi and Rewari. Lahore was famous for the manufacture of brass shamadans. Hindus used brass lota without a spout. The Muslims used a *tuntidar lota* of copper. Stone cutters flourished from father to son.

Cloth

The Panjab women were skilful workers of cotton, silk, wool, leather, wood and iron. Cotton spinning was practised almost in every home. Coarse cotton cloth was woven in every village. Adoka, chhint, dotahi, bafta, chariah, fotas, sozani, were manufactured at Bajwara, Rahon and Sultanpur in the Jalandhar Doab. Lungis were manufactured at Peshawar. The lungis of Multan and Shahpur were more ornate. A special cloth made of a mixture of cotton and wool called garbi loi was woven in Gurdaspur district and was exported to all parts of India.

The glazed fabirc of Jalandhar known as ghati and bulbul chashm or nightingale eye were famous. Cotton daris or carpets and rugs called shatranji were made at Peshawar, Gujrat, Sialkot and Lahore. Multan was noted for the manufacture of carpets, washing soap and mustard oil of best quality. Cotton prints of Kot Kamalia, Lahore and Sultanpur enjoyed great reputation. The printing was done by hand with small wooden blocks. Geometrical designs and decorative forms of men, women, animals, birds and flowers were stamped on pieces of cloth for decorating walls, etc. James Browne wrote that very few clothes were manufactured at Lahore.

Cutlery

Knives and scissors of fine quality were manufactured at Bhera and Gujranwala.

Glasswork

It was mainly confined to the production of glass bangles, bottles,

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tumblers, lamps and mirrors, generally made at Lahore, Kangra and Hoshiarpur.

Gold and Silver Work

Ornaments of gold and silver were universally worn. There were ninety-nine ornaments which were worn by the people. Gold lace or gota was made by women in the homes. Gold and silver leaves were made at Lahore and in other towns. Lahore was a famous centre for the manufacture of gold wire, ingot-making, gilding and tinsel-making.

Gold washing was carried on at various places in the upper reaches of Panjab rivers. The industry was not remunerative as day's hard work produced gold to the value of a few paise.

Ivory Work

Ivory carving was confined to Delhi. Ivory bangles were made in Derah Ghazi Khan, Multan, Gujranwala and Lahore.

Leather Work

The undressed skins of full-grown cattle were termed hides, and those of calves, sheep and goats were known as skins. The main articles made were saddlery and shoes. Shoes were often elaborately embroidered and even jewelled. The places famous for artistic shoes and leather work were Peshawar, Kohat, Rawalpindi, Derah Ghazi Khan, Lahore, Kangra and Hoshiarpur.

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The sword covers and belts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Derajat were richly embroidered and were beautiful. The powder flasks, bullet cases and pouches attached to them exhibited fine work.

The socks, trousers and coats made from deer skin (sambar) were famous all over the Panjab. Afghan postins, coats of sheep skin with the wool turned inward were richly embroidered.

Paper Manufacture

The paper was made by hand and the workers were usually Muslims. There were about 500 families engaged in this business. It was made from the bark of a tree. White in colour, it was smooth and glossy like the skin of a deer. It was also made from bhabhar and munj grasses at Sialkot, and was brownish in colour. Paper of good quality was also manufactured in Kashmir. The paper was known by different names according to its quality such as Mansinghia, Domoharia, Hariri and Jahangiri.

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Phulkari

Phulkari means flower work. It is a kind of embroidery done on hand-spun, hand-woven and home-dyed covering sheet (chadar), a head-wear, by village women of Panjab. The embroidery work was done by young girls of marriageable age under the guidance of elderly women. The work was done with great care and attention as the sheet was to be included in the dowry presents. The best phulkari was considered one that covered the whole chadar. The handiwork was done from the back of the cloth producing the design on the front side. There was a great variety of design, representing human beings, animals, birds, plants, flowers and fruits in brilliant colours, yellow, blue, green, white, red, pink, orange, etc. The best specimen contained 52 different designs. The most popular scenes depicted on the cloth pertained to village life such as a woman on a spinning wheel or churning curd, or serving breakfast to men in the field or a juggler showing bear and monkey dances, or a snake-charmer displaying his skill or a wrestling bout. Phulkari was a common feature of rural life in Jat villages.

Pottery

A potter or kumhar produced non-glazed pottery. The artistic potter or kuzagar turned out glazed pottery. For glazed or painted pottery the most reputed centres were Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Pind Dadan Khan, Multan, Gujranwala, Lahore, Jalandhar, Tanda and Hoshiarpur. The glazed earthen *chilams* of *hukkas* and large earthen jars made at Lahore were good and in great demand. The colour was given after the pottery had been fired. The predominant colours were blue, brown and green.

Shawls

Moorcroft travelled through the Panjab in 1819-20. He found that a large number of Kashmiris had settled at Amritsar and manufactured shawls, which were of inferior quality. The yarn consisted of mixed wool of Tibet and Bokhara. The Tibet wool was sold from 6 to 8 rupees a kg, and Bokhara wool from Rs. 2 to 4. A woman could spin one tola of wool in a day. Her husband could earn 2½ annas by weaving in a day. There were 2,000 shops selling shawls in Amritsar. Amritsar exported shawls to England and France. One merchant of Amritsar showed Hugel orders for shawls from these countries. Amritsar had 900 silk weavers and 735 winders of wool into balls, while 2205 persons were engaged in the manufacture of silk cloth in Amritsar.

There were colonies of Kashmiris at Jammu and Nurpur also. They

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manufactured shawls. In delicacy and texture they were inferior to those of Kashmir.

Silk Manufacture

The whole supply of silk used in the Panjab was imported from China and Bokhara. The silk of Bokhara, being stronger and more glossy, was in greater demand. Silk was woven into various varieties. Its main centres were Lahore, Multan, Dipalpur, Jalandhar, and Bahawalpur. The important and popular varieties were daryai and gulbadan. Silk was used pure and also mixed with cotton. Turbans and waistbands of cotton cloth with silk borders were largely made. Netted silk was made in the form of fringes, tessels, girdles, trouser strings.

Wine

Wine was prepared from grapes. A superior kind of wine was made in Kashmir.

Wood Work

Wood carving was mostly architectural confined to doors and windows. Pen-cases, walking sticks, mirror cases were made of shisham wood and inlaid with ivory and brass. The important centres of ornamental wood work and furniture were Kashmir, Peshawar, Bhera, Chiniot, Gujrat, Lahore, Pakpattan, Batala, Jalandhar, and Hoshiarpur.

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Woollen Manufactures

Blankets, lois, shawls, rugs and pattus of hair of goats, sheep and camels were made on handlooms here and there all over the country. Felts or namdas made of spun wool and used as beds and floor rugs and for horse cloths were made in Kashmir, Hazara, Bannu, Derah Ghazi Khan and Bhera. Kashmir carpets were well known all over the world. The Multan carpets were marked by the size of the stitch and an aggressive colouring. Peshawar and Quetta were the centres for the Afghan, Turkoman and Persian carpets. Kohat, Bannu and a few other places along the north-western frontier produced a particular kind of rug called *nakhzi*. The great centre of shawl production was Kashmir. The shawls of Kashmir were much sought after by princes, rulers, and nobles of India. Shawls were mainly of two shapes. The doshala, twin shawls were always sold in pairs. The kasaba or chadar was the other.

The jamewar cloth used for woollen coats or choghas, generally worn by Muslim nobility, was manufactured in Kashmir and Sialkot.

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The best wool in the Panjab came from Peshawar, Derah Ismail Khan, Multan, Jhang, Shahpur, Jehlam and Rawalpindi. The Tibet wool came through Kashmir, Kulu and Rampur Bushahar.

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B. TRADE AND COMMERCE

Before Ranjit Singh there was little trade, both internal and external, in Panjab. The second half of the eighteenth century was the period of complete confusion and chaos. Foreign invasions almost every alternate year, and rowdy element in the population resulted in complete negation of law and order.

The Grand Trunk Road had been closed to traffic. Many parts of this great artery passed through deserted places. They had been converted into jungle haunted by tigers and wild beasts. There was no population on both sides of it. Roving bands of bandits roamed about unchecked and uninterrupted. Some traffic and trade was carried on through the northern hills via Jammu, Nurpur, Kangra, Bilaspur, Nalagarh, Nahan, Dehra Dun and Hardwar. Even this road was not safe. Ghulam Muhammad, an agent of Shah Zaman of Kabul was caught in a conflict with a local chief who

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tried to seize his property. In the fight near Jammu the bandits lost 35 men and Ghulam Muhammad 13 men out of 24 who carried his goods. At Behandralta (now called Ramnaga) he found a place of safety.

Means of Communication

The means of communication were bad. Metalled roads were unknown. One was stuck in mud during rains, and was covered with dust in dry weather. In the rainy season rivers and streams were flooded, and travelling came to a stop. Baron Charles Hugel in 1835 noted that water in some streams was 20 to 30 feet deep.

In Ranjit Singh's time, the Grand Trunk Road from Phillaur to Peshawar was 640 km long. There were several link roads of local importance. They were short feeders connecting villages with different towns and cities. The headmen through whose villages the roads passed provided protection to travellers and traders and levied a small toll on the passing traffic. The kardars were responsible for all the thefts and robberies committed within their jurisdiction.

The Grand Trunk Road was marked by pillars of stone or brick. They were called karoh minars. At intervals police posts or chaukis and serais were established for protection and convenience of travellers and traders. The chief means of transport of goods was the bullock-cart. Its movement was slow. It covered about 3 km in an hour, and from 20 to 25 km was reckoned as a day's good journey. Donkeys were in common use. In the desert of Sind Sagar Doab and Multan province camel was the chief means of transport. Ponies, mules and labourers served this purpose. In the plains ekka driven by a horse carried passengers. It accommodated six or seven persons going at a speed of 8 km an hour. Men of status travelled in a sedan or palanquin or litter called doli. They were carried by bearers, 4 to 5 in number. There were no bridges on rivers. At Lahore there was a bridge of boats on the Ravi. The Kangra valley road brought hill products to Pathankot. The Rawalpindi-Murree-Kohala road went ahead to Kashmir. These roads were fit for mule traffic only.

There were two modes to carry government mail, by horsemen and runners. For the first there were relay stations after every 15 km. For the second there was a stage at regular intervals. The approach of a runner was heralded by the sound of bells attached to the end of the staff he carried in his hand. They did not carry private letters. The soldiers on expeditions were allowed to communicate with their families. Baron Charles Hugel wrote: "I observed that he (Ranjit Singh) could not possibly do better than make good roads, which would facilitate the

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movements from one place to another so rapid and easy, that their numbers would be apparently doubled."

After many interrogatories, he answered: "Yes, but I should make it also more easy for an enemy to advance against me."

Merchandise was carried on mules and camels. Long strings of loaded camels slowly moving in a line with little bells sweetly tinkling from their necks were the goods trains of that age. The merchants accompanying these were armed.

Phillaur-Kangra-Jammu Road

Baron Charles Hugel travelled in the Panjab in 1835-36. On crossing river Satluj he found the road in such a bad condition as if no "communication whatever is carried on." Large stones were lying loose in the path. From Pathankot to Sanba the jungle was covered with so high sarkanda grass that a walking elephant could remain hidden in it. "The tiger takes up his abode here." The path was constantly broken up by ravines and rapid water compelling the traveller to "swerve very far from the original line."

The road from Lahore to Hari-ke was in good condition. Panjab rivers, though navigable and cheaper for transport, were not much used.

Towards the close of Maharaja's reign Shahamat Ali wrote about north-west Panjab:

> A part of Bakrala road was made by General Ventura, but the Sikh Government was averse to such works, being of opinion that improving them only prepared the way for a foreign enemy from the west, who would thereby be able to enter their country without obstruction. Formerly the passage was very dangerous from freebooters, and the travellers could not pass but in kafilas. A single traveller could now pass with safety: though the neighbouring hills were inhabited by a wild, predatory race of people.

Travelling was on the whole safe though there were robbers and thieves on the roads and even in great serais where travellers halted in the night.

Self-sufficiency

For the villages and towns in the Panjab self-sufficiency was the rule. Every town and village worked like a small independent republic. All the requirements of the people were met in the village or town. Every village

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had its own cultivators who grew grain, pulses, cotton, oil-seeds, sugarcane and tobacco. The other workers were blacksmith, carpenter, waterman, washerman, cobbler, sweeper, and cowherd. There was little contact with the outside world. The village shopkeeper supplied the needs in the form of grocery and money. The number of shops in a place was an index to its prosperity. All the boys found brides in one or two neighbouring villages.

The practice of hoarding money, gold, silver and ornaments was common with the masses. There were no banks. The functions of a bank were performed by moneylenders, who were invariably shopkeepers. They provided credit facilities in the form of small loans bearing high interest against land and jewellery. A sympathetic moneylender with a soft and serene behaviour commanded great respect. He was called *Shahji*, or *Lalaji*. His status is thus depicted in an old proverb:

> *Bina Guru gat nahin,*
> *Bina Shahji pat nahin.*
> (There is no salvation without the *Guru*, there is no honour without the banker).

A hard-hearted and relentless banker was hated and was called *Kirar* or blood-sucker.

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Money was given for marriages, and for the purchase of land, one or more oxen for ploughing or milch-cattle. In the whole village there was hardly a family which owed no debt to a banker. The *Marwari banyas* called *Jagat Seth* or world-banker maintained their agencies in the whole of India and Central Asia including Russia. Even Anandpur had an agency in the time of Guru Gobind Singh, who frequently demanded gold from his disciples through hundis equivalent to modern bank drafts.

The Commercial Classes

Khatris

The Khatris formed a large portion of the mercantile class. They were enterprising as merchants and frugal as ants. They were the principal financiers and accountants of the Sikh kingdom. They monopolised the trade of the Panjab and Afghanistan, and did a great deal of business in the other neighbouring countries too. "By industry and knowledge of accounts", wrote H.B. Edwardes in 1848, "these people, as is observed throughout all Afghanistan, have made themselves indispensable to the indolent and ignorant Pathans; and in spite of oppression and occasional

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plunder had accumulated wealth." Sir George Campbell observed that a Pathan often fought against another Pathan for having stolen his Khatri. They were great money-lenders. There were few zamindars who had no account with them. They had a share, whether large or small, in their estates either by mortgage or by sale. They enjoyed good reputation for their culture, enlightenment and refinement. They were inferior to none in courage and spirit. They took great care of their property, life, honour and religion.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Khatris were held in great respect. They were appointed to high posts in civil and military departments. They produced great warriors and administrators. The most prominent courtiers of the Maharaja were Diwan Mohkam Chand, Diwan Sawan Mal Chopra and Hari Singh Nalwa, an Uppal Khatri. General Avitabile demolished the houses of Khatris at Peshawar and exacted large sums of money from them. Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered Ventura to force Avitabile to build new houses for them and refund the money.

Banyas and Aroras

Among other commercial classes were Banyas. They were mainly Agarwals and lived solely by commerce. They performed functions of cardinal importance in village economy. Their social standing was high. In the Sikh kingdom they were found mainly in the Jalandhar and Upper Bari Doabs. They were strict Hindus. During Muslim rule they escaped forcible conversion by paying blackmail. They did not develop beauty in their womenfolk to avoid enticement. They were practically unknown to the west of Lahore, where Khatris were dominant.

Mahajans were traders in the hills. Suds were found in the territory lying at the foot of the hills. Aroras and Bhatias existed mainly in the districts of Multan, Derajat, Kohat and Peshawar. They were traders par excellence of the south-western Panjab. They were versatile, active, enterprising, industrious and thrifty. They were found in Afghanistan and Turkistan. In the Lower Chenab area they were admirable cultivators. They were found among Sikhs and Muslims also.

Labanas

The Labanas like banjaras were carriers of grain and merchandise. They were employed by Khatris and Aroras. They possessed great courage and endurance. They were found chiefly in the districts of Gurdaspur, Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Gujrat. A large colony of Labanas existed at Bahawalpur where they were mostly Sahajdhari Sikhs.

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Khojahs

Khojahs were Muslim merchants in the central and western parts of the Panjab. They had colonies at Chiniot and Jhang. Their special trade was in tanned hides.

Banjaras

Another trading community was the Banjaras. They carried on trade in grain, raw sugar, salt and oil on their packed animals like ponies and bullocks. They were the chief suppliers to the army in the camp and in the field. They were traders par excellence. They were versatile, active, enterprising, industrious and thrifty. They were found in Afghanistan and Turkistan also. They were Sikhs and Muslims too.

Jacquemont in 1832 noted that the people of Panjab engaged in trade were Aroras, Banias and Khatris among Hindus, Afghans and Khojas among Musalmans, and Bedis and Sodhis among the Sikhs.

Prachas

The Prachas derived their name from *parcha* (cloth). They dealt in clothes, silk, indigo and tea. Their transactions extended to Afghanistan and Turkistan. They lay scattered in Central Panjab.

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Gosains

Gosains were leading traders in Kangra hills. They possessed a monopoly of opium and charas trade which they purchased in Kulu and sold in the plains of the Panjab. Their transactions extended throughout India.

Maniars

The Maniars sold glass bangles in villages and towns.

Bedis

Among the Sikhs Bedis were travelling merchants. Ranjit Singh granted them the sole monopoly of external trade in Majha or the districts of Lahore, Amritsar and Gurdaspur. One-fourth of customs duty was remitted to them.

Sodhis

Sodhis were equally held in high esteem. They were great landlords as well as merchants. As traders they were charged only half the amount of tolls. They were frequently employed by big merchants to carry goods from one place to another to avoid expense and inconvenience.

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Patiala Centre

A great part of the trade was conducted from Amritsar to Machhiwara and thence to Patiala. Patiala had become the centre of three trade routes. One led through Hansi and Rajgarh to Rajasthan. By way of Pehowa, Thanesar and Karnal goods were carried to the Ganga Doab, and via Kaithal, Jind and Rohtak to Delhi.

Internal Trade

Internal trade flourished along rivers and roads. The northern hills exchanged cloth, horses and matchlocks for blankets, iron, ginger, turmeric, black zira, etc. The exports from Panjab to Kashmir consisted of cotton cloth, indigo, wheat, rice and sugar. Imports included fruit, saffron, shawls and silk. Ladakh exported to Panjab borax, China tea, felt, precious stones of Tibet, shawls, pashmina, silk and wool.

Customs Duties

Missar Ralia Ram was the head of the Customs department. Customs duties were levied on every article even on fuel wood and vegetables. No distinction was made between rich and poor. According to Griffin duties were charged on 48 articles. As regards salt tax Wade told the Maharaja on 25 February, 1832, that in British territory it was customary to take salt tax from the trader at one place. Afterwards he could go anywhere in his country, and nobody could interfere with him. He suggested that the same practice should be adopted in the Sikh kingdom. At Rojhan on the Sind border the charges were very light, 7 paise of today for 40 kg. of sugar, and 3½ paise for 40 kg. of other articles.

On 16 May, 1839, Maharaja approved the following scale of customs duties on export and imports:

Shawls	per maund	Rs. 10.00
Opium	"	7.50
Indigo	"	2.50
Cloth of all sorts	"	Re. 0.25
Sugar, molasses, oil, ghi, etc.	"	1.00
Drugs, fruits, metals, dyes	"	0.25
Grain of all sorts	"	0.12

This policy of taxation was due to the fact that to stop foreign invasions from the north-west, to suppress lawless activities of the frontier tribes, to keep the people of the Panjab in control in the absence of police system, and to make new conquests, Ranjit Singh had to maintain

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a large army with expensive weapons of warfare. To meet its expenditure money was an essential factor.

Cash and Barter

Cash system prevailed in towns and cities. Barter system existed in rural areas and in the hills. In Kulu coarse cloth, chhint and cotton fabrics were exchanged for opium and musk.

Currency

Ranjit Singh introduced his currency in 1801. It was struck at Lahore, and was called Nanakshahi currency. It consisted of silver rupees and copper paise. It bore neither the name nor an effigy of the Maharaja. A rupee had 11 mashas and 2 rattis of silver. The paisa was of copper. The coins bore the following inscription:

Dego Tego, Fatah wa Nusrat bedarang,
Yafi az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh,
(Guru Gobind Singh obtained from Nanak immediate triumph and victory by service and the sword.)

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On the reverse, the coins bore the date and name of the mint.

Mint

The Maharaja had established mints at Lahore, Amritsar, Multan and Srinagar. For the mints of Lahore and Amritsar, silver came from Ladakh, Mathura and from Tipu Sultan's rupees of Mysore. Towards the close of his reign he closed the mints at Multan and Srinagar, but the coins already issued were allowed to remain in circulation.

Miscellaneous Currency

In Ranjit Singh's time several currencies were in use in Panjab. Besides Nanakshahi currency there was Company's rupee called Chehrashahi. In Panjab it was exchanged for annas 15 or 15½ out of 16.

Under Article 16 of the Tripartite Treaty of 1838, the British Government had to remit to Lahore 5 lakhs of rupees out of 15 lakhs of the tribute of Sind. Its market value increased and the shroffs accepted it at a discount of 2%. The passage of British forces through the Panjab on their way to Kabul put the Company's rupee at par with Nanakshahi rupee.

In Derah Ghazi Khan Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk's silver rupee was in use. It was today's 8 paise less than the Nanakshahi rupee.

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At Leiah

Mehrabi currency-rupees, annas, takas and paise was in use.

60 paise = 1 rupee

31 takas = 1 rupee

One Nanakshahi rupee was equal to 1 rupee and 3 annas of Mehrabi currency.

At Multan

A rupee struck at Multan was called Chilki rupee.

100 Chilki Rs. = 80 Nanakshahi Rs.

At Rawalpindi

Zamanshahi currency was in circulation. One Nanakshahi rupee was equal to 1-0-3 Zamanshahi rupee. Or one rupee and 1½ paise. In Kashmir Harisinghia rupee was current. One Harisinghia rupee was equal to 9 annas of the Nanakshahi currency and 10 annas of Company's currency.

Nanakshahi Weights

100 Nanakshahi rupees made 1 seer and 40 seers made one maund.

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Rents

R. Leech in 1837 noted the following rents at Rawalpindi:

Rent of a small shop at chowk = Re. 1 per month

Rent of a big shop at chowk = Rs. 2 per month

Trade with Other Parts of India

Panjab maintained its trade with other parts of India, particularly Bihar, Bengal and the Deccan. Panjab exported camels, horses, bows and arrows, matchlocks, shawls, swords, cotton cloth, woollen fabrics, ghi, oils, hides in large quantities, rice, dry fruit, sugar, rock salt, Multani matti, indigo, tobacco, and imported European coarse broad cloth, brass, iron, lead, copper, spices and goods such as cutlery and hardware, sulphur, and elephants, watches, china and glasswares, pearls, precious stones, drugs and dye stuffs.

Trade by the Indus

In response to the British desire to develop trade by the Indus, the Maharaja concluded commercial treaties with the British in 1832, 1834, 1838, 1839. He persuaded traders of Lahore and Amritsar to despatch

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their goods to Bombay in about 30 boats by the Satluj and the Indus and then by sea. He offered to compensate them for any loss in transit. He wanted to export wool, sweet potatoes and rock salt and to import from Bombay banat cloth and English chhints.

Foreign Trade

With regard to its foreign trade Panjab did not occupy a good position. The countries situated in the north and west of it were all sparsely populated and did not have a large number of consumers to make them good markets for the products of the Panjab.

Tibet, Ladakh, Kashmir and Turkistan were situated in the north. Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Iran lay in the west. The United Provinces of Agra and Oudh which were in the east, though a valuable market were useless to the Panjab because they produced the same kind of commodities.

On the other hand its rivers gave no access to the sea and they were also not easily navigable. Therefore much of its external trade could not be expected. Whatever of it there would have been was almost entirely checked by the anarchy of the time before Ranjit Singh.

Panjab had commercial relations with Afghanistan. Kabul was a great commercial centre. Another focal point for a thriving commercial artery was Kandhar. It pumped goods of Khorasan, Iran and Southern Afghanistan to Shikarpur, Multan and Lahore. Goods from Tibet came down the Hindustan-Tibet-road through Rampur Bushahar, or through Kulu from Ladakh across Spiti. The main articles of export from Panjab were brocades, camphor, cloves, cotton, cotton cloth, ebony, indigo, ivory, jewellery, lac, matchlocks, nutmeg, opium, paper, perfumery, pearls, rice, salt, sandalwood, shawls, sealing wax, sugar, wheat and woollen fabrics. The imports comprised borax, copper, dry and fresh fruits, horses, iron, lead, muskbags, saffron, shawls, silk, Persian carpets, sulphur, swords, tails of mountain cows, and wool.

Steinbach writes:

> During the latter years of the rule of Ranjit Singh, the tranquillity which prevailed stimulated traffic, and a considerable commercial intercourse between the Panjab, British India, and Afghanistan was the result.

The external trade was generally in the hands of Shikarpuri merchants, and Lohani or Pawindah merchants. They were Muslims. They carried on trade between Turkistan and India on camels and ponies.

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Many Afghans and Baluchis came in Panjab in winter with their families and flocks, and returned to their mountain homes on the approach of hot weather. Some of them engaged themselves in carrying on trade of petty merchandise. In addition to them the Pawindah caravans entered Panjab in the beginning of cold weather. They left their families in the Derajat, and advanced into the heart of India with merchandise of Iran, Khorasan and Afghanistan laden on camels.

Some of them passed through Panjab and the charge of the caravan was as a rule entrusted to Bedis called Nanakputras. They enjoyed certain privileges among the Sikhs. They were respected and the caravan was allowed to pass unmolested on paying customs duties. The Bedis never carried arms, and strictly forbade the caravan to use them.

In the earlier part of Ranjit Singh's rule, the Muslim merchants of Afghanistan, Iran, Khorasan and Turkistan stopped passing through the Panjab, and from Shikarpur diverted their route through Sind and Rajasthan to Delhi, Agra and other places. As a consequence the city of Jaipur rose to importance.

Pawindahs

The Pawindahs arrived in the Panjab in September every year, accompanied by their women and children. They went back in April with the merchandise of India loaded on their mules and camels. They belonged to several Afghan tribes. They were generally called Lohanis, but in the Derajat they were known as Pawindahs. They moved in large bodies varying from 5,000 to 10,000. Regular marches and encampments were observed under an elected Khan or leader. They passed through the country of Waziris who carried on against them war of the bullet and bayonet year after year and generation after generation. They paid blackmail to the Waziris in order to pass safely across their land. The Pawindahs were as much soldiers as merchants. They were always heavily armed. They paid customs duties to the Sikh Government on the Indus. There was hardly a Pawindah who did not have one or more wounds on his body. "Loss of an eye, broken noses, fractured skull, lame legs and mutilated arms were almost as common as freckles in England."

They left their families at about 32 km west of Derah Ismail Khan, to spend winter there in the mild climate and luxuriant pastures. With their camel loads of goods they went to different parts of India. The Lohanis were divided into three divisions. Those going to Hindustan pursued their path through Derah Ghazi Khan, Khangan, Bahawalpur, Bhatner, Hisar and Delhi. The second group came to Multan via Kohari and Leiah

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in 10 marches. The third batch went to Amritsar through Derah Ismail Khan, Darya Khan, 8 km east of the Indus opposite Derah Ismail Khan and Asipur.

Trade in Horses

Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Sikh nobility were fond of horses. The horses were in great demand for the army. Therefore, trade in horses was very brisk. Sikh traders bought horses in Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia and sold them in the Panjab. Multan was a great mart for sale and purchase of Iraqi, Khorasani and Turki horses.

A large part of Panjab's wealth went out of the country. To meet the army's requirement Ranjit Singh established studs at Pathi, Dinga and Shahpur. To encourage indigenous growth of horses the Maharaja imposed a heavy tax of Rs. 60 per horse between Peshawar and Lahore. That is why Alexander Burnes found the road from Delhi to Kabul via Lahore, Attock and Peshawar almost deserted of horses.

Trade Routes

Among several routes one passed from Panjab through the Khaibar Pass to Kabul, Balkh and Bokhara. Another route led to Kandhar and Herat via Multan, Derah Ghazi Khan and Bolan Pass. A route from Kashmir went to Ladakh, Lhasa and Yarqand. Traders passed through difficult mountains, jungles and roads infested with robbers. Goods came by the Tibet-Hindustan road to Shimla or entered Kulu from Ladakh. Ice was brought from Dhaula Dhar mountains and was sold in the bazars of Lahore.

Imports and Exports

China tea was imported through Lhasa and Yarqand, in square lumps, covered with coarse yellow paper, stamped with a Chinese seal, packed in raw skins of yaks. The Kashmiris preferred Tibetan tea to English and Chinese tea. Kashmir shawls were sent to France and England. Chhintzes of Multan, Bara rice of Peshawar and shawls of Kashmir were exported to Iran. Coarse and fine cloth of Hoshiarpur, cotton lungis of Peshawar, sugar and madder were exported to Kabul and Balkh. Imports included raw silk, embroidered choghas, pattu, postin, furs, horses, spices, blankets, fruits dry and fresh. Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Amritsar were the main marts for goods from Afghanistan. From Khorasan dyes and drugs were imported. Exports to that country included Taimurshahi and Shujakhani chhintzes and indigo worth 5½ lakhs of rupees, coarse cotton cloth,

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daryai and gulbadan, from Multan and Derah Ghazi Khan every year.

Russia imported Kashmiri shawls. The best pair fetched Rs. 12,000. Its exports to the Panjab were quirmiz dye to dye raw silk, leather and velvets. Exports to Tibet were shawls, chhintzes, grain and tinned vessels. Imports included shawl wool. About 800 loads were annually sent to Kashmir. The wool of wild goat called Ashi Tus was sent to Kashmir. The sheep of Tibet, used as beasts of burden, were sent to Kulu. Exports to Turkistan included indigo, 500 camel loads of which were sent there every year. Sugar was sent from Jalandhar and Bara rice from Peshawar. Men and women of Bokhara wore a turban 30 yards long and one foot broad. It went from the Panjab and was sold for a tilla each. Tea was sent from Amritsar. It was in great demand at Bokhara. Pashm was sold there from 6½ to 8 tillas per maund of 256 lbs. of English weight. One camel load was 6½ maunds. Indigo was exported to Yarqand. Imports from there included felts, sheep skins, shawl wool, horses and drugs.

Checking of Blackmarketing

Ranjit Singh had appointed bazar chaudhris in every city and town to check blackmarketing and smuggling. On 30 July, 1825, Maharaja summoned Chait Singh, Kotwal of Lahore, to explain why he had imprisoned Banyas of Lahore. He replied that those Banyas had been raising the price of grain everyday. A clash took place between the Banyas and the customers. Three persons were wounded. He made enquiry on the spot and found the Banyas guilty. Now they had been released with a stern warning not to hoard grain, and sell it at usual rates.

Seth Mirza Mal Bansal of Churu in Rajasthan

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a great parton of trade and commerce. He was fond of importing such articles of luxury as were needed on the occasions of great festivals like Dasahra and Diwali or marriages in the royal family and of nobility. He appointed agents to supply the required articles. One of such men was Seth Mirza Mal Bansal, (1791-1848), an Agarwal Banya of Churu, in Rajasthan, not far away from Hisar in Haryana.[1]

Mirza Mal was the Maharaja's chief adviser in commercial and revenue matters. Moorcroft also refers to him in this connection. The Maharaja showed him special favours.

1. In 1817 Ranjit Singh ordered that octroi duty on Mirza Mal's goods

[1]Vide papers contributed by Jugal Kishore Gupta of Sirsa to the Panjab History Conference at Panjabi University, Patiala.

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should be charged at half rates.

2. In 1826 the Maharaja ordered that the customs duty on Mirza Mal's goods in the province of Multan should be exempted by 25 per cent.

3. In 1828 the Maharaja placed at Mirza Mal's disposal 15 shops and one stable to conduct his wholesale business. He was granted exemption of 25% of octroi duties at Lahore also.

4. The Maharaja ordered Mirza Mal to supply the following articles to the Government:

Dhaka malmal, turbans, desi banat, makhmal, gulnar, gulbadan, pashmina, shawls, saris, chakmak stones, iron balls, saunon, shisha Bakdar, zinc, ambar, misri Bikaneri, ark, loba, dalchini, honey, elephants, horses, necklaces studded with jewels, bracelets. For these articles he was paid Rs. 3,33,666. Mirza Mal appointed his agents at Amritsar.

5. When Gobindgarh fort at Amritsar was under construction in 1828, the Maharaja ordered Mirza Mal to supply a number of metals such as copper, iron and zinc.

6. The Maharaja issued rahdaris to Mirza Mal to save him from harassment by members of octroi posts.

7. In 1828 Diwan Kirpa Ram asked Mirza Mal to supply 3,000 beads of gold worth Rs.15,000. They were deposited with Missar Beli Ram Toshakhania in April, 1829. They were 160 tolas in weight.

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8. In 1828, the gumashta (agent) of Mirza Mal gave articles and cash to the value of Rs. 2,189 and 4 annas as *nazrana* to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Hira Singh, Faqir Aziz-ud-din, Missar Beli Ram, Devi Das Peshauria, Kishan Das Peshauria, Khushhal Singh, Raja Dhian Singh, Kahan Singh, Missar Sukh Raj. Ventura got articles worth Rs. 648 and 4 annas.

9. On another occasion Maharaja Ranjit Singh presented to Mirza Mal a necklace studded with jewels.

10. In 1834, some goods of Mirza Mal were stolen in transit. The Maharaja at once ordered an enquiry and for recovery of stolen articles.

11. On the death of Mirza Mal's mother Ranjit Singh sent to Churu some clothes and cash at her *Sharadh* function.

Comment

Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave every encouragement to industry and trade and commerce, both internal and external. Moderate duties and taxes were charged. The people were given full protection on the road. Baron Charles Hugel and Edward Thornton, both contemporaries, testify that during his rule highway robbery and thefts had been almost completely eliminated. As a result transit duties from north-western countries formed

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a greater source of income than the duties charged from manufacturers. Serais were built at convenient places for traders and travellers. Facilities of credit and correspondence through state postal service were provided.

Ranjit Singh developed among his nobles, courtiers and officials, a liking for fine clothes. The uniforms of a large standing army also encouraged manufacture of silken and woollen cloth. He encouraged manufacture of silk cloth at Multan by giving robes of honour to his courtiers and visitors. He frequently travelled all over the Panjab and North-West Frontier. He was followed by his army, chiefs and retinue, all wearing gorgeous dresses. This example was followed by village women and townsmen. Lieutenant William Barr in 1839 noted that the people of Lahore took pride "in the fineness of their apparel and beauty of their ornaments." It led to brisk trade in silk, shawls and jewellery.

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CHAPTER 30

A Happy and Loyal People

Extent of the Kingdom

According to *Calcutta Review*, Ranjit Singh's kingdom was 290 miles or nearly 500 km long and 344 miles or about 600 km broad with an area of 50,400 square miles. The total income amounted to about three crores of rupees a year.

Total Population

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The system of taking census did not exist. European travellers and visitors at different times made their own estimates. In 1830 Steinbach thought that the population of the Panjab under Ranjit Singh was about 12 lakhs. In 1831 Alexander Burnes estimated the total population of the Panjab at 35 lakhs. Another estimate given by a cavalry officer as well as by Von Orlich of Ranjit Singh's kingdom including Panjab, Jammu and Kashmir was at five millions. Henry Lawrence about the time of Ranjit Singh's death put the Panjab population at 15 lakhs. In our view the total population of the Panjab at the beginning of Ranjit Singh's rule should be taken at about 15 lakhs, and at the time of his death at 30 lakhs.

Distribution of Population

The population in the Sikh kingdon mainly consisted of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Steinbach in 1830 put the ratio of Hindus and Muslims at three to one. Colonel Bellasis in 1830 gave the ratio at two to one. He thought that the Sikhs were about one-sixth, Hindus one-half, and Muslims one-third of the total population. Ali-ud-din in 1849 put the ratio at one to three. The appraisal of the British authorities at the time of annexation in 1849 was that in the Sikh kingdom from the river Satluj to the Khaibar Pass Muslims were two-thirds of the total population,

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and of the remaining one-third Hindus and Sikhs shared equally half and half.

As regards Lahore, the capital of the Sikh kingdom, John Lawrence, Officiating Resident at Lahore, wrote on 12 January, 1848, that the Muslims exceeded the Hindus of all sects in the proportion of three to two.

As one passed from Lahore to the north-west and south-west, the Muslim population steadily increased until it was entirely Muslim across the Indus. The Sikhs were found in majority in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar, called Majha or the middle tract. The number of Hindus increased as one moved towards the east. The Jalandhar and Upper Bari Doabs were the most densely populated areas of the Panjab on account of their rich soil, and healthy climate. The sparsely populated areas were in the hills, deserts in West Panjab, and river banks open to floods and malaria fever

The Hindus

There was not a single village in possession of a Hindu zamindar in the Sind Sagar Doab, which was about 400 km long and from 50 to 150 km wide. About 12,000 Hindus lived there in villages and towns as traders. Approximately the same number of Hindus could be found in the Chaj Doab. In the hilly area of this Doab, about 3 lakh Hindus lived there. In the hill territories in the Rachna and Bari Doabs the Hindus formed an overwhelming majority. In West Panjab, Hindus lived mostly in towns and cities. In hundreds of villages not a single Hindu could be found.

The Sikhs

There was almost no Sikh population west of river Jehlam, and there were few Sikhs to be found 50 km south of Lahore. To the east of Lahore, the Sikhs did not at all compose one-third of the entire population. "The paucity of Seiks," wrote Alexander Burnes in 1831, "in a country, ruled and governed by them, is remarkable." He estimated the Sikh population in the Panjab at 5 lakhs. Cunningham in 1846 considered the gross Sikh population at about 15 lakhs, men, women and children.

The Sikhs lived mostly in villages. According to Ibbetson not even 8 per cent Sikhs lived in towns and they included Sikh soldiers residing in towns and cities. The Jats formed about two-thirds of the entire Sikh population. Of the remaining one-third, about 20 per cent consisted of village workers, and the rest of Brahmans, Khatris and others who had embraced Sikhism.

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The Muslims

The rich and influential Muslims having several wives, slave girls and concubines in the Jalandhar Doab lived in towns and cities. In the West Panjab they resided mostly in villages. Purdah was far stronger in the west than in the eastern parts. Boys and girls married at a later age in the west than in the east. The population was more rural in the west than in the east. Excepting Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Multan there were fewer towns in the west than in the east.

The Village

The people in the Panjab lived mostly in villages. The towns and cities were few and far between. Mud-built houses raised in a haphazard way was the rule. A big or a rich village alone could boast of a couple of pakka houses. Most of the villages were surrounded by a mud wall for defence and protection. Many of them had ditches around them outside the wall. Most of the villages possessed small fort like houses with towers.

Every Muslim village had one or more mosques. A Hindu village had a temple and a Sikh village a gurdwara. Each village had its own bazar. The number of shops in a village was an index to its prosperity. The shopkeeper played the part of a grocer and banker. He was called Shahji and was greeted with Shahji Ram Ram. ('May the blessings of God be upon thee, My Lord.')

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The village well was a popular rendezvous. Files of women thronged it with earthen or brass jars upon their heads. The little children clung to their mothers' skirts as they wended their way to the well. The Persian-wheel, by its sweet and melodious sound, added to the noise caused by the chattering of men, women and children who assembled there in the morning and evening. Sanitation was bad. Streets were dirty, filthy and unswept. Dirty water flowed therein.

Migration

There was little migration in the Sikh kingdom. The people in rural area lived and died in their home villages. The temporary demand for labour or for service in the Sikh army brought about some migration. It did not extend to long distances. The question of seeking wives and husbands made them cross the borders into neighbouring districts. Temporary migration of people from one place to another occurred sometime due to local failure of food cereals and fodder. Floods were also a cause of migration. Generally, the youths went alone, leaving their families behind. Only in cases of severe famines the whole family moved in search of food

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and fodder for their animals.

There was some movement in population in the higher ranges of mountains. For example many inhabitants in the high hills of Bharmaur in Chamba came into the warm valley of Kangra for winter months only Similarly people from Lahaul moved into Kulu.

In some cases permanent migration took place. Owing to the severity of famines in Kashmir in 1783 and 1833, and maladministration many Kashmiri families settled at Gujrat, Amritsar and Nurpur. In 1847 about 4,000 Kashmiri working-apprentices left Srinagar for Lahore to settle there permanently.

In 1808 many families of Muslim nobility migrated from Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Derah Ghazi Khan, and other places to Bahawalpur. There they were employed in high offices of the State. They settled there permanently. Many Hindu Mahtons, family by family and village by village, moved from the Chenab and the Ravi eastward for safety and security.

Brahmans

At the top of Hindu society stood Brahmans. A Brahman was revered by Hindus and Sikhs alike. His presence was essential at every stage of life of a Hindu. Without his advice no child was named, betrothed or married, nobody was cremated, no journey was undertaken, no house was built, and no agricultural or commercial operation was begun. They were found as traders in towns and villages and were addressed as missar. The Mohyal Brahmans in the West Panjab served as soldiers.

A Brahman well-versed in Hindi and Sanskrit was called Pandit. He organised katha and kirtan, viz. discourses and singing of holy hymns from the *Gita,* the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. He also practised astrology. There were many Brahmans in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The most important of them were Missar Diwan Chand, the conqueror of Multan and Kashmir, and Diwan Dina Nath.

Sayyids

Among Muslims the Sayyids were on top. They were held in great reverence by all Muslims. They were regarded as direct descendants of the holy Prophet. They had pride of blood and rank. They were landowners, but bad cultivators. They often mortgaged lands for money. They gave their daughters in marriage only to Sayyids. Prejudice against widow marriage was very strong among them. The Sikh government granted to them certain favours and concessions. The amount of revenue to be charged from them was fixed at a lower rate. In the Frontier Province to evade

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payment of revenues to the Sikh rulers, they stirred up religious feelings of the lawless tribes and instigated them to fight a holy war against them.

Rajputs

The Rajputs were excellent soldiers, but poor cultivators. Pride of blood was their greatest impediment. Prejudice against the use of plough was so strong among them that they would follow any other pursuit except agriculture. They let out their lands to tenants. Only the poorest Rajputs tilled land. They preferred pastoral to agricultural avocation. On account of strict purdah system, their women stayed indoors. The entire field-work was done by men. Their marriage expenses were great and style of living higher. Mahtons were inferior Rajputs because they practised widow remarriage and specialised in cultivating melons. They lived in Kangra hills.

The Rajputs were Hindu as well as Muslim. The Hindu Rajputs were found mostly in the hills and in a small number in the plains. The Muslim Rajputs called Ranghars lay scattered in different parts of the Panjab. They were not as good farmers as were Jats and Sainis. The hill Rajputs were good cultivators. The number of Sikh Rajputs was very small. They were found in Sialkot, Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur districts.

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Jats

The Jats worked in the fields from sunrise to sunset and from infacy to old age. Their knowledge of crops and cattle was unrivalled. Every member of the family from tiny children to old men shared in the field work. According to Sir Lepel Griffin, the Jats outnumbered Rajputs by three to one.

Pastoral Groups

The pastoral groups consisted of Kathia, Kharal and Gujars. There were extensive grazing grounds in the western plains called Bar. This region was inhabited by the nomad pastoral tribes such as Kathias and Kharals. They settled on a spot until the pasture within reach was exhausted. Then they moved their encampments to the new grounds. Their houses consisted of temporary sheds made of reeds and grass. They were hardy and industrious. They allowed their hair to grow in loose tresses which hung over their shoulders. They were predatory and warlike people. They owned large herds of cattle and camels. They supplied milk, butter and ghi to Lahore and Amritsar. They cultivated grain in fields round their habitations. They were notorious cattle lifters.

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Gujars

Gujars or Gauchars were graziers rather than cultivators. They kept cows and buffaloes, more than any other tribe. Their love of cattle was so great that they observed regular mourning over the death of a milch cow or buffalo like the death of a family member. They lived at places where there was a grazing ground for their flocks and herds. Their women carried milk, butter and ghi to the market for sale. The Gujars were notorious cattle lifters and thieves.

Artisans

There were numerous artisans both superior and inferior. The superior artisans included Sunar (goldsmith), Niyaria (gold refiner), Daoli (washer of gold), Thathera (manufacturer of metal vessels) and Tarkhan (carpenter). The inferior artisans were Raj (mason), Lohar (blacksmith), Kumhar (potter), Julaha (weaver), Chhinba (calico-printer), Dhobi (washerman), Darzi (tailor), Pinja (cotton-carder), Teli (oil-presser), Jhinwar (water-carrier), Kalal (distiller of wine), Machhi (fisherman), Bhatyara (baker), Mallah (sailor or boatman), Khumra (stone-cutter) and Nai (barber).

Goldsmiths were Hindu in the eastern parts and in the Salt Range tract. In Multan district and in the North-West Frontier Province they were Musalman. There were a few Sikh goldsmiths in Central Panjab. A Julaha (weaver) was Hindu in Kangra and Hoshiarpur districts and Muslim in the rest of the Panjab. The Sikh Julahas were few in number. He was not a true village worker, being paid by the yard and not by customary dues.

A Gadaria or shepherd manufactured blankets from the wool gathered from his sheep and goats. A dyer or Lilari or Nilari coloured garments of the people in indigo only. He was paid in cash, and he lived mostly in towns and cities. He was Muslim by religion. A Rangrez dyed in all country colours except indigo. He was a Muslim. A Chhinba stamped coloured patterns on cotton-fabrics. He dyed in madder and in no other colour.

A Dhobi or washerman was a true village worker as he received a fixed share of the produce in return for washing clothes of villagers. He kept an ass for carrying clothes to and from the ghat. He was mainly a Muslim. His tomorrow implied next week.

The craft of tailoring was practised by people of different castes and religions. Darzis were generally Hindu in the east and Muslim in the west. A Pinja or Dhunia or Nadaf was a cotton-scutcher to fill in quilts. He had a flourishing business in winter. He was in general a Muslim. A

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Teli extracted oil from oil-seeds. He was exclusively a Muslim. A Jhinwar also called Kahar or Mehra was a water-carrier and basket-maker. He carried planaquins and loads in a bahngi. He was a village worker receiving customary dues. He supplied water in the homes as well as in the fields. If he carried water in a skin he was called Saqqa or Mashki, and if in earthen or brass vessels a Kahar. A Kahar was Hindu and Mashki a Muslim. A Kalal was distiller and seller of spirituous liquors. He was found in large numbers in areas populated mostly by Sikhs.

Barber

A barber was called Nai or Hajjam in the eastern and central Panjab, Jajak in west Panjab and Kanghera or comb-man in the hills. He shaved and shampooed people. He served tobacco at the village rest house and attended on the guests. He was the hereditary bearer of important messages such as news of auspicious events, formal congratulations, fixation of marriage dates from one village to another. In the company of a Brahman he formed an embassy to conclude a betrothal or settled terms for match-making. At a wedding he looked after the guests. He was commonly addressed as Raja in order to give him a high status. He was the Jarrah or surgeon of the country. He performed circumcision. A barber who shaved a sweeper was not permitted to touch a person of a higher caste. Barbers were Hindu in Hindu-populated areas, and Muslim in Muslim-populated areas. A Sikh barber was called Naherna. He performed all odd jobs except cutting hair and shaving beards.

Menials

The menial families comprised sweepers, leather-workers, etc. A sweeper was called Chuhra, Bhangi, Khakrob or Mehtar. Among his manifold duties were sweeping of houses and cattle sheds, collection and patting of cattle-dung into cakes. News of death was communicated to a friend or relative through him. The flesh of dead animals of undivided hoofs belonged to the sweeper. They were used in Begar. They followed the religion of their neighbours. In Hindu-populated areas they were Hindus, Muslims in Muslim-majority areas, and Sikh among Sikhs.

The Sikh Chuhras made fine soldiers, and were extensively enlisted in the Khalsa army. They were posted on the Peshawar frontier where they displayed remarkable bravery and endurance in fighting against the fierce and brutal Afghans. They were followers of Balmik, a great hunter of Karnal district.

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Chamar

The Chamars were tanners and leather-workers. They claimed all the dead animals of the village. They kept hides and ate flesh of all cloven-footed animals. They made and mended shoes, thongs for carts and whips for carters and horsemen. They also did a great deal of weaving. They were followers of Ravi Das. The Sikh Chamars were called Ramdasia after the name of Guru Ram Das who had invited Chamars to join Sikh religion.

The Entertaining Class

The entertaining class consisted of persons who followed specialised professions for the amusement of people, young and old, in villages and towns and cities.

Dums

Dums were also called Mirasi. They acted as bards, buffoons, genealogists, musicians and minstrels. They possessed an admirable fund of ready wit, jokes and anecdotes, to amuse their clients. They visited the houses of all the people in the village once a year. If they were assured of good fees, they showered compliments on them and their ancestors. If they were not properly treated, they exposed the long-forgotten scandals of the family. They attended weddings and funerals. They were always Muslims. Their elderly women accompanied newly married daughters of their masters to the girl's father-in-law's house, and also went with the son's wife returning to her paternal home.

Three or four Dums were always attached to a Pathan of rank, and hundreds of Dums gathered on the occasion of a wedding in the family of a big Pathan. All of them received customary dues. Their wives acted as midwives.

Some Mirasis played upon rabab, a musical instrument. They were called Rababis. They recited hymns from the Holy *Granth*. They wore long hair and dressed like Sikhs.

Bhrupia

A Bhrupia was an actor or a mimic, and assumed many forms of character. A Bhand or Naqqal was a story-teller, joker and buffoon. A qalandar was a monkey-man. He was seen leading bears, monkeys and other performing animals. The sound of his dugdugi attracted children and people to see his feats and he got grain and money as his fee. He was always a Muslim.

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Snake-charmers

Snake-charmers were called Saperas. They inherited the art of snake-catching from their fore-fathers. They played upon *bin* in the jungle and snakes were attracted to them. While catching a snake they took a solemn vow to release it after a certain period, and this vow was religiously kept. They kept themselves immune to venom by applying the juice of a herb, the name of which was never disclosed outside their tribe. Their women were never allowed to catch snakes. They entertained the masses by the dance of their cobras to the tune of *bin* and by displaying different kinds of snakes.

Jugglers

They performed their acrobatic feats before a group of spectators.

Bazigar and Nat

The Nats and Bazigars were a gipsy tribe of vagrant habits. They wandered about with their families settling for a few days or weeks at a time in the vicinity of a large village or town. They performed acrobatic feats and subsisted on the voluntary contribution obtained from the people.

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Nomads or Vagrant Sects

Nomads or vagrant sects led a wandering life. They were given to thieving. *Nomads* built houses, dug tanks and wells. In the Salt Range tract they quarried and carried stones. Their women and children worked with them. They married after the Hindu fashion, but buried their dead like the Muslims.

Changars

Changars worked as reapers at harvest time while their women cleaned grain for grain-dealers. They were all Muslims. In Lahore there was a colony adjacent to Anarkali Bazar called Changar mohalla.

Bawarias

The Bawarias were famous for catching game by snare. They were notorious thieves. They revered cow, wore a dhoti, burnt their dead, and sent ashes of their dead to the Ganga. They were found chiefly in the Satluj Valley.

Sansis

Sansis were keen hunters and scandalous robbers. Their women sang,

danced and prostituted. They were given to thieving.

Kanjars

The Kanjars made ropes, fans, baskets, mats, and other articles of grass for sale. They divided their girls into two classes, one they marrried themselves, and the other they brought up for prostitution, not by their own tribe.

Gagras or Jokaras

They kept and applied leeches as a cure for high blood pressure. They were Muslims.

Minas

Minas were partially nomad tribes. Their women and children lived in fixed places, while men moved about for theft.

Etiquette

All showed great reverence for age and rank. A senior member and a father always sat at the head and a junior member at the foot of a cot. In Peshawar district, a son always sat in the presence of his father on a cot turned upside down. A son addressed his father as Pitaji, Abbaji and mother as Mataji, or Manji. An elderly woman was addressed as Manji or Maiji. The parents called their children as Kaka, Munna, and Kaki or Munni. The rustics called them Munda and Kuri. An elder brother was addressed by the younger brothers and sisters as Bhaiji, Virji or Bharaji, and the elder sister as Bahanji or Didi. A wife never uttered the name of her husband and called him as Shila's or Ram's Bapu. Similarly the husband never called his wife by name.

A Brahman was addressed as Missarji or Panditji. The Mohyal Brahmans were called Bakhshiji, Mehtaji, Diwanji or Raizada Sahib. A Khatri and a Banya were addressed as Sethji, Lalaji or Shahji. A Rajput was called Ranaji, Thakurji or Chaudhri Sahib. The Dogra Rajputs of Jammu were called Mianji. A Sayyid was addressed as Mir Sahib, and a Pathan as Khan Sahib. A barber was called Raja. A Sikh was addressed as Khalsaji or Sardarji. A Musalman of high status was called *Khudawand-e-Nemat*.

An inferior while visiting a superior had to take off his shoes outside the gate. The custom of advancing a short distance to receive a guest or visitor of status was known as Rasam-e-Istiqbal. When two men met or departed, they shook hands with each other. In Peshawar district, the two persons on meeting embraced each other passing his hand three times

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from right to left round the other's breast. On departure too the ceremony of embracing was repeated. Women embraced each other with their arms thrown around each other's neck, and screamed aloud a chorus on the occasion of departure. A Hindu showed his astonishment by uttering the words Ram, Ram, a Sikh by Wah Guru and a Muslim by Taubah, Taubah.

The Hindus greeted each other with Ram, Ram, or Jai Ram Ji Ki or Namaskar or Parnam. The reply was returned in the same words. A Brahman was saluted with 'pairi paina' or 'palagan' or 'matha tekna'. The reply was Sukhi raho (May you be happy!).

The Bedi Sikhs saluted each other with matha tekna. When two Sikhs met, the junior saluted the senior with Wah Guruji Ka Khalsa, Wah Guruji Ki Fatah, or Sat Sri Akal.

A Muslim saluted each other with Salam-alaikum and the reply was Wa-alaikum-salam. A Muslim saluted a Hindu or Sikh with the word Lalaji, Salam or Sardarji, Salam. A Hindu saluted a Muslim with Sahib Salam. The reply was given in the same words, and to a younger person with Umar draz (May you live long!). A Hindu swore by the Ganga, a Sikh by the Holy *Granth*, and a Muslim by the Holy *Quran*.

The war cries of Hindus were, Ram Ram, Mahadev and Jai Jai Kar, of the Muslims, Ya Ali or Ya Allah, or Allah-o-Akbar; and of the Sikhs, Wah Guruji, Wah Guruji Ka Khalsa or Sat Sri Akal. The flag of the Hindus was of saffron colour, of the Muslims of green colour and of the Sikhs of yellow colour.

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People in general believed in numerous superstitions, ghosts and witches. Ghosts were called *bhut* and witches *dains*. Moorcroft and Trebeck while travelling halted at Nadaun on 15 June, 1820. They observed the case of an allegedly called witch. A zamindar had lost his son and a cow. He accused an old woman of the village. He said she had eaten their livers. The poor woman was produced before Raja Sansar Chand. When severely beaten with whips she pleaded guilty and her head was immediately cut off.

Women

Girls were betrothed at the ae of 3 or 4, and married when 5 or 6. The ceremony of final departure called *muklawa* was performed just under teens. In her in-laws' house she was fully guarded against improper indulgence by her mother-in-law for 2 or 3 years to preserve her health.

The condition of young widows was miserable. In many cases she was shaved. She wore coarse and uncoloured clothes. Embellishments, laughter, music and sport were denied to ner. She ate when all other members of

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the family had taken their meals. In upper classes widow marriage was not permitted. Cases of elopement were rare, purdah system prevailed in the higher sections of society. The belief in fate and previous life was so firm and deep that the widows bore their misfortune with wonderful fortitude and showed no signs of grief and no ill will against anybody or society.

As *karewa* or marrying a brother's widow or widow remarriage was an established fact among the Sikh Jats of the Panjab, a father addressed his daughter thus: "Come my daughter and be married; if this husband dies, there are plenty more."[1]

The three Jat families, the Bains of Mahilpur, the Sahotas of Garhdiwala, and the Khungas of Budhipind, all known by the name of Akbari, followed some of the customs of the higher castes. They did not allow widow-marriage, and wore sacred thread on the occasions of their marriage, but removed it after a few days.[2]

A Jat named Mehar Mitha of Majha offered his daughter in marriage to Emperor Akbar. The wedding ceremony was attended by the people of 35 Jat villages and 36 Rajput villages. These villages came to be called Durbar villages. In Hoshiarpur district there were Sikh Durbar villages of Garhdiwala, Mahilpur and Budhipind, and two Rajput Durbar villages, Garhashankar and Hariana.[3]

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Some Hindus considered it a meritorious and holy deed to dedicate a girl to a temple be called *Devdasi*. Baron Charles Hugel noticed a large number of them at the Jawalamukhi temple in Kangra district in 1835. More than twenty girls surrounded the gate of his tent. He admitted only four of them inside the tent. They were very richly dressed, and had a ring passing through the left nostril (*nathli*). Another golden ornament was suspended at the tip of the nose exactly before the mouth (*balak*). All with one exception were fair and had beautifully white teeth. They spent an hour in singing and dancing before him but he gave them no money or reward.[4]

Education

Education was not popular in those days. In Muslim villages Arabic was taught in mosques. In addition to local pupils, some students, generally orphans, studied there. They crammed *siparas* or thirty chapters

[1]Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 33; Ibbetson, *Punjab Census*, 222, 234; W. Crook, 92.
[2]*Hoshiarpur Distt. Gaz. 1883-4*, 56.
[3]Ibid., 45.
[4]Hugel, p. 57.

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of the Holy *Quran*. The whole class moved their heads to and fro continuously repeating loudly their lessons. There was no uniformity of lessons. Everybody progressed individually. They were called *Talib-e-ilm*. The poor pupils collected their food and a lot of *lassi* or butter-milk from Muslim families and ate at the mosque. The teacher in-charge was called Maulvi or Mullah or Hafiz. He gave a loud call (*Azan*) five times a day inviting the faithful to say prayers.

The pupils who claimed mastery of the *Quran* were sent to a central institute of Arabic studies. The candidates were subjected to a stiff test. Those who passed were appointed in-charge of a village mosque or promoted to the higher class. Persian was also taught along with Arabic. *Gulistan, Bostan* and *Pand Namah* were the general books of study.

The School of Moran Kanchani

This school was housed at Lahore in the mosque of Moran, wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Eminent teachers included Khalifas Ghulam Rasul and Ghulamullah. The former was a great authority in Arabic, while the latter was famous for his learning in Persian, and was held in great esteem by the Maharaja. The school was attended by hundreds of scholars of all communities. Some students came from Iran and Arabia, Arabic, Persian, Grammar and *Hadis* were the prominent subjects taught there. The school was heavily endowed.

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Lande Mahajani and Hindi

The roving teachers visisted some Hindu villages. To begin with sand was spread on the floor and alphabets and numbers in Arithmetic were taught by drawing the letters and numbers with a finger. After sometime a wooden-board called *takhti* was used. It was plastered with Multani Matti called *gachni*. Letters and numbers were written on both sides of it. They were washed away and the *takhti* was again covered with wet *gachni*, counting and multiplication tables called *pahare* were learnt by heart.

The teacher received no salary. He was provided free board and lodging. He stayed at one place generally for about six months. In the farewell function the boys led the teacher to their own houses singing and playing with small sticks called Chauk Chaukri. The parents and other well-to-do persons offered the teacher some money or a piece of cloth or some utensil.

Gurmukhi

Gurmukhi was taught in Gurdwaras where the Holy *Granth* was

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recited every morning and evening. Only Sikh student attended these classes. Bhai Ram Singh opened a Gurmukhi school at Amritsar. Ranjit Singh made a grant of Rs. 1,200 annually to it.

English

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was keen to have a few persons educated in English at his court. He wished to send some students to Ludhiana. Captain Wade replied that there was no school or any arrangement for teaching English there. An Englis lass had been opened at Delhi in the Delhi College, at Ajmeri Gate in 1828. The Maharaja came to know about it in 1832, but there was no arrangement for outside students.

In 1834 a Mission school was started at Ludhiana. Ranjit Singh sent a young man to join that school. Wade told him that he could not learn English without becoming a Christian. He informed him that Ram Kishan, a Delhi student of the English class, had embraced Christianity. The boy was frightened and he returned to Lahore. The Maharaja persuaded Jamadar Khushhal Singh to send his son Ram Singh to Ludhiana school to learn English. Wade went on telling him to become a Christian in order to make a rapid progress. After sometime the Jamadar left for Hardwar. Ram Singh joined his father and his education came to an end.

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The Maharaja then proposed that Gujar Singh, brother of Lahna Singh Majithia, should go to England to receive English education. But the proposal fell through.

Ranjit Singh entrusted Kanwar Sher Singh to Captain Wade to import him knowledge of English language. He acquired a smattering of it but fell in love over head and ears with the European style of living, Raja Hira Singh and Faqir Aziz-ud-din also gained some knowledge of English. In 1838 Hira Singh could convene with Emily Eden.

In 1843 Von Orlich recorded that Hira Singh "Speaks so much English that we could readily understand each other." Mian Qadir Bakhsh, a young man employed in Artillery Department studied at Ludhiana school for sometime. He got so much efficiency that he compiled a book on gunnery in Persian by studying English books.

The Maharaja decided to open an English school at Lahore. He invited Reverend John C. Lawrie, D.D. from Ludhiana.

To the great disappointment of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Lawrie insisted on teaching the *Bible*, and the scheme could not be realized.

Houses of the Rich and the Poor Royalty

Maharaja Ranjit Singh remained busy in establishing peace and order

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throughout his reign, and could not make any notable contribution in the field of art and architecture. His architects, Ilahi Bakhsh, Allah Yar and his son Muhammad Yar, built a beautiful house at Lahore in an arabesque fashion. It was adorned with small pieces of mirrors set in various patterns with enamel. Sir Henry Jane, British Commander-in-Chief, noted in 1837 that they shone like diamonds in candle light. The walls were decorated with flowers and foliage. He built a two-storeyed bungalow movable on wheels. It was taken to Dinanagar and Rupar at the meeting with Lord William Bentinck.

The Maharaja constructed Shish Mahal in a lovely garden at Wazirabad. It was two-storeyed high. Its apartments were embellished with fresco paintings.

The *haveli* or mansion of prince Nau Nichal Singh at Lahore contained spacious chambers, halls, balconies. The ceilings were decorated with paintings and mirrors, worked in gold. The walls were richly ornamented with glass and artificial flowers. The British after annexation converted it into a girls' school.

Maharaja Sher Singh's house at Batala was a huge building, which was used as Baring High School.

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Nobility

The *haveli* of Raja Dhian Singh was situated in Hira Mandi at Lahore. It contained numerous rooms and a big courtyard. Later on it housed the Dayal Singh High School.

In General Allard's garden house at Lahore, the Eagle and Nepoleon's flag were displayed on every wall. The upper storey was reserved for his womenfolk, General Ventura built a splendid house at Lahore.

Hari Singh Nalwa built a majestic garden house at Gujranwala. It was three-storeyed high. Each room was 16 feet square. All the rooms were furnished with Kashmiri shawls, Irani carpets, skins of lions and tigers. It has underground cells for rest in summer, called *tahkhana, sardkhana* or *zer-e-zamin.*

Khas Tatties

Small mats of Khas grass were used to keep rooms cool in hot weather. They were tied to doors and windows and water was profusely sprinkled over them to emit fragrant and cool air. Maharaja Ranjit Singh lived in May and June at Dinanagar in a bungalow of Khas grass. His European guests were always accommodated in summer in houses furnished with Khas *tatties*, Wade's tent was entirely composed of Khas. Lieutenant

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William Barr wrote in 1838 that "its extremely low temperature is very delightful when compared with the furnace-like atmosphere without."

Commonality

In big towns and cities the houses of the common people were made of bricks, generally one or two storeys high. Emily Eden in 1838 found single storey houses at Amritsar not higher than an elephant of full size. It was considered auspicious to have the house facing north or east. A well was never dug to the south of the house.

The houses in villages were generally *kachcha*, one storey high, rough and crude in construction, with no windows no bathrooms and no latrines, having a courtyard enclosed by a porch. A corner of the courtyard was used for a kitchen. Most of the time of women was spent in the courtyard. Menfolk while entering the porch knocked at the door, loudly coughed to enable women to cover their heads and faces, and to get aside to make room for senior male members to pass by.

Comment

From the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 till the last foreign invasion in 1799, was a period of violence and terrorism. It was followed by an epoch of peace and prosperity from 1799 to 1839. Great disagreement had existed between the rulers and the ruled for nearly eight hundred years. It was considerably reduced, and both the communities began to live in amity and peace.

All sections of society were contented and led a happy life in security from invaders and local rascals and vagabonds. The people were sober and well-disposed. Drinking was rare except in government circles. Sexual immorality except by professional women in cities and cantonments was universally reprobated. The older men of the Mohalla strove to check it. Early marriages tended to keep the domestic life pure.

During his reign no riots and no revolts took place in the Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The only distrubed districts were in the North-West Frontier. The lawless tribes of the region had given no peace even to Akbar and Aurangzeb. In Ranjit Singh's time not a single Musalman gave any help in men, money and material to Sayyid Ahmad and to the rulers of Afghanistan in their Jihad against the Sikhs.

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(About Education Only)

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CHAPTER 31

Journey to Eternity

Illness and Death

Ranjit Singh had got a stroke of paralysis in 1834 from which he never fully recovered. His premature death was due to excessive use of wine, opium, concubines, dancing girls and his most painstaking habit to attend to the minutest details in connection with Lord Auckland's visit at Firozpur. In fact, Firozpur proved the crematorium of Ranjit Singh himself as well as of his kingdom seven years later. The five weeks visit by the Governor-General completely shattered his health. Lord Auckland paid him the farewell visit on 31 December, 1838 to bid good-bye to the year which was never to return as well as to the Maharaja whom he was destined never to see him again. The Maharaja lay in bed unable to speak or rise and accepted good-bye by a glance of his right eye.

At the end of Firozpur meeting the Maharaja was allowed no rest by constant and pressing demands by British officers for the supplies of grain, fodder, transport, boats, etc. for their First Afghan War. A British force marched through the Panjab to Khaibar Pass and established their base camp at Peshawar which became a bed of intrigues for the dissolution of the Sikh kingdom.

On 5 January, 1839, the Maharaja's condition worsened. His words became incomprehensible. Rheumatic pains in the knees became unbrearable. On 8 January, his condition badly deteriorated. He was caught by dropsy and fever. All medicines became ineffective. His body was fast declining and decaying–*Marz barhta gaya jun jun dava ki.*

But his mind remained active all the time. He made enquiries by gestures of his sparkling right eye. They were understood by Faqir-Aziz-ud-din. For example, by turning his glance towards the south, he wanted to hear the news about the English, by looking to the north regarding

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Afghanistan and the Birtish expedition and by turning his gaze to the middle between north and south concerning his own kingdom.

Like every living being, Ranjit Singh loved life. He wished to recover his health by any means in his power. As desired by him an English Physician, Doctor Steele, was sent to Lahore; but he found his case beyond the power of medicines.

Ranjit Singh firmly believed in the prayers of holy men, and efficacy of charities. He contributed with utmost liberally to the sacred places of Hindus, Sikhs and Musalmans. Faqirs, Pandits, Bedi and Sodhi Sikhs, received their shares most profusely. Valuable jagirs were assigned to gurdwaras, temples and tombs. His elephants, beloved horses with jewelled howdahs and saddles, cows with gilded horns, gems, pearls, diamonds, golden vessels and bedsheets, jewels, silks and shawls were freely distributed. He donated things worth 30 lakhs to the gurdwara at Nander in the Deccan. All the charities amounted to about one crore of rupees. Recitation from holy books of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs was continued uninterrupted.

Like the last flicker of a dying earthen lamp, the Maharaja showed signs of health. On 13 June, 1839, he prostrated before the Holy *Granth,* made an *ardas,* performed Tuladan and distributed charities to various places. On 19 June, he inspected the drill of Gorkha regiment and the platoon of Dhaunkal Singh. On 21 June he appointed Kharak Singh his successor with Raja Dhian Singh as his Prime Minister. John Holms was appointed in-charge of Gobindgarh fort and to maintain peace and order at Amritsar. Raja Hira Singh was established in Anarkali Bazar at Lahore. On 22 June, the Maharaja went out for an airing in his special conveyance and soon came back. At sunset he took a little food, and then sank into drowsiness.

On 23 June he took medicines, went out to Baradari garden in his special conveyance and returned. He called on a sadhu who was staying in a garden outside Roshni Gate, made prostration and offered him Rs. 101 for *Ardas.* On 24 June he found no strength left in him. On 25 June he sat in an easy chair only for a while. On 26 June early in the morning he made prostration before *Granth Sahib.* Elephants and other costly things were given away in charity.

Bhai Gobind Ram said that Sarkar once wanted to donate Koh-e-Nur to Jagannath Puri. The Maharaja made a sign that it should be done by Kharak Singh. He asked Beli Ram to produce it. He made excuses that it was in Gobindgarh fort at Amritsar. Sarkar was adorned with ornaments and then they were removed from every limb. He placed his head on earth and gave them away in charity.

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27 June, 1839

On Thursday morning, 27 June, Sarkar passed nine motions in 3 hours. The tongue stopped. The pulse went down. At noon the pulse of one hand was in the hand of Bhai Gobind Ram, and of the other hand in that of Bhai Gurmukh Singh. Just then Raja Suchait Singh arrived from Ramnagar, and presented Rs. 500 as *sirwama,* and 21 gold ducats as *nazar.* Bhai Gobind Ram loudly said that the Maharaja should accept offerings. The Sarkar opened his eyes, and then closed them. Bhai Gobind Ram loudly asked him to repeat Ram Ram three times. Sarkar repeated the words twice. He was taken off the cot and laid on the ground on which *tulsi* leaves, sesame and golden butkins, each worth Rs. 5, had been spread. The soul flew out of his body through the eyes at 5 P.M. Thus Nature ended the most dramatic career as varied as it was eventful and as strange as it was unique. Recitation from holy books was continued. The whole night passed in weeping and wailing. Many cried and shrieked in lamentation, tearing their hair, beating heads, and throwing themselves on the ground.

The Obsequies

On 28 June, 1839, the corpse of the Maharaja was placed on a chauki. His hair was washed with Ganga water, and his body was thoroughly bathed. He was dressed in a new suit of clothes. It was placed on a bier of sandalwood, adorned with flowers of gold. Four Ranis showed determination to become *Sati.* They included Rani Gaddan Mahtab Devi, daughter of Raja Sansar Chand Katock of Kangra; Hardevi, daughter of Mian Padam Singh of Nurpur, Raj Kaur, daughter of Sardar Jai Singh of Chainpur near Amritsar, and Ishar Kaur. Kharak Singh's entreaties to change their mind produced no effect.

All the nobles had assembled. The Katochan Rani Mahtab Devi, one of the four Ranis, the principal mourner came out of palace into the large courtyard barefoot and unveiled for the first time in life. She slowly advanced towards the royal body. She was surrounded at a distance by about 100 persons. One man close by her side carried a small box containing jewellery. She had already distributed most of it. Two or three steps in front of her, a man was moving in the backward direction with his face towards the Rani. He was showing her a looking glass to enable her to see her face that it bore no sings of any grief or sorrow. As she was giving away her ornaments freely, Colonel Steinbach felt tempted to receive from the Rani a gift, but he suppressed his desire. The Rani Katochan was followed by other ladies of the harem. They were weeping

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bitterly. Some of them including Gul Begam fell senseless on the ground. All of them made *parkarma*, i.e. went round the royal body and made prostration. A street of double line of infantry was formed.

The funeral procession consisted of several thousand men. Only men of high rank could join the procession. All were clad in spotless white. The four Ranis, barefoot, were carried in open golden litters on shoulders of men behind the deceased. Their silk dresses were simple and without any ornaments. Seven concubines, some of them only 14 or 15 years old, including the famous Lotus, also accompanied on foot to become *Sati*. The Maharaja's body was carried on a decorated bias, which was in the shape of a ship, with sails and flags made of golden *kimkhab* and of Kashmir shawls, borne upon the shoulders of soldiers. A group of musicians was in front singing in melancholy melody. Drums were softly beaten in a mourning tune which mingled with the slow repetition of holy hymns by the people. The cremation ground was in front of the gates of Hazuri Bagh palaces. The funeral pyre was constructed of sandalwood. It was six feet high and square. Some pieces of aloe were placed on it. The Brahmans and Granthis offered prayers at the stie. The Maharaja's body was placed on the funeral pyre.

Just then the Rani Gaddan Mahtab Devi, the chief widow, all of a sudden caught hold of the hand of Raja Dhian Singh, and placed it on the breast of the deceased and made him take an oath of loyalty never to desert Kharak Singh and his son Nau Nihal Singh, and not to forget the interests of the Sikh State. Similarly, Kharak Singh was made to swear never to betray or desert Dhian Singh. In case of infidelity to the oath she placed the *Sati's* curse for complete destruction on the head of each.

Rani Gaddan then mounted the pyre. She placed the head of the Maharaja on her thighs. The other Ranis and seven concubines seated themselves around the corpse with every sign of peace and tranquillity on their bare faces. They were covered up with sandalwood. Straw was wrapped on all sides. Kharak Singh lighted the fire. Without any groan or shriek all were reduced to ashes.

Raja Dhian Singh being over-powered by feelings of gratitude for the late Maharaja, thought of offering as a tribute, his own life to the flames. He made four attempts to jump into the burning pyre, but was held up every time by the great Ministers and Sardars, in the interest of the Sikh kingdom. The reason was that he alone enjoyed the complete confidence of all the civil and military officers as well as of the Sikh army for the preservation of the Sikh State in this hour of agony and grief.

Nature also shed tears of bereavement on the death of this great man.

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Just when the pyre was lit, a small cloud appeared overhead and let down a few drops of a drizzle.

The ashes of the Maharaja, Ranis and concubines were collected separately on 30 June, and were put in bejewelled urns. They were placed in palanquins of gold. Kharak Singh, Dhian Singh and Khushhal Singh accompanied them to Hardwar.

The procession was organized in a gorgeous splendour as if the Maharaja and his queens and concubines were alive. On the arrival of the ashes at Amritsar, merchants and other dignitaries of the city placed *doshalas* over them. When the ashes arrived at Ludhiana, a warm reception was given by firing cannon and placing *doshalas*. At Patiala, Raja Karam Singh received them by placing gold coins and *doshalas* over them. At Ambala, Jagadhri and Saharanpur great welcome was accorded everywhere.

Family

As regards his wives they stayed at Lahore for a short time and for the greater period they lived at their maternal homes or on their jagirs or at other place assinged to them. Mahtab Kaur lived at Batala or Mukerian, her mother's headquarters. Raj Kaur resided at Shaikhpura, her jagir granted to her by Ranjit Singh. The two sisters Daya Kaur and Ratan Kaur were allotted permanent residence at Sialkot. The two Katoch Gaddan princesses, Mahtab Devi and Raj Banso, dwelt at Nadaun on the Beas. Ranjit Singh visited them as he frequently travelled all over the Panjab or called them to Lahore whenever he needed any one of them. They were generally political wives married for their territory or wealth or beauty. Wives rolled in wealth. Every lady was granted valuable large jagirs. Kharak Singh's mother left cash and jewellery worth one crore of rupees at her death.

The senior wives had independent quarters with courtyards. Others lived in small but beautiful nicely furnished rooms. Two or three concubines had a separate set of rooms in common. All spent their time in dressing and decorating themselves, eating, sleeping, gossiping and playing games. In the evening dancing girls entertained them with sweet music and soulful dances. Dancing girls and slave girls lived in big halls five or six together.

Concubines were selected from his platoon of dancing girls received in tribute. They were generally taken at the age of 11 or 12, and were sent off to their jagirs when between 18 and 20 years. They had their rooms in a separate palace. The dancing girls lived in the city in a few *havelis* guarded by his troops. They were discarded when 18 or 20 years old. They

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were granted handsome allowances and were allowed to live wherever they liked.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had 20 wives, of whom the following were married by circumambulation:

1. Mahtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur, born in 1783, married in 1786, *nuklawa* in 1796, died in 1813.

2. Raj Kaur, daughter of Ran Singh Nakai, a Sandhu Jat married in 1798, died in 1838.

3. Moran, a Muslim dancing girl of Lahore, married in 1802, sent to live at Pathanfort in 1811.

4. Rup Kaur, daughter of Jai Singh, headman of village Kot Said Mahmud in Amritsar district, married in 1815.

5. Lachhmi, daughter of Desa Singh a Sandhu Jat of village Jogkikhan in Gujranwala district, married in 1820.

6 & 7. Mahtab Devi and Raj Banso, daughters of Raja Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra married in 1828. Raj Banso died in 1835, and Mahtab Devi became *sati* in 1839.

8. Gul Bahar or Gul Begam, a Muslim dancing girl of Amritsar, married in 1832, died at Lahore in 1863, received an annual allowance from British Government of Rs. 12,380.

9. Ram Devi, daughter of Kaur Singh of village Chhachriwala in Gujranwala district.

10. Bhuri, who built a temple at Lahore.

The following were married by Chadardalna:

1. Rani Devi, daughter of Wazir Nakudda of Jaswan, in Una district of Himachal Pradesh.

2 & 3. Ratan Kaur and Daya Kaur, two sisters, widows of Sahib Singh of Gujrat, renowned for their beauty, married in 1811. Sahib Singh's first wife was the sister of Ranjit Singh's father. Daya Kaur died in 1843.

4. Chand Kaur, daughter of Jai Singh Jat of Chainpur in Amritsar district, married in 1815, died in 1840.

5. Mahtab Kaur, daughter of Sujan Singh Jat of Gurdaspur district, married in 1822.

6. Saman Kaur, daughter of Suba Singh Jat of Malwa, married in 1832.

7. Gulab Kaur, daughter of Jat zamindar of village Jagdev in Amritsar district.

8. Jindan, daughter of Manna Singh Aulakh Jat of village Chachar in Gujranwala district. He was Kumedan to look after hunding dogs. She was born in 1817, married in 1835 died in 1861.

9. Har Devi, daughter of Chaudhri Ramu, Rajput of Atalgarh.

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10. Devno, of village Deval Vatala in Jammu territory.

Sons

In spite of Ranjit Singh's large household he had only seven sons. There is no mention of a daughter anywhere.

1. Kharak Singh, born to Raj Kaur, called Mai Nakain, in 1802. He resembled Ranjit Singh in appearance without his intellect. Gardner calls him a 'blockhead'

2 & 3. Sher Singh and Tara Singh; born to Mahtab Kaur, in 1805 and 1807. Her first child was Ishar Singh who died at the age of 1½ years. Ranjit Singh was sure that Sher Singh was the outcome of his body. In those days the Maharaja was in love over head and ears with Moran *kanchani.* Mahtab Kaur, supported by her mother Sada Kaur, strongly protested and demanded dismissal of Moran. It resulted in frequent quarrels. Ranjit Singh retaliated by turning her out of Lahore and declaring that her two sons were illegitimate. In a regularly continuous dispute Mahtab Kaur fell ill and gave birth to a sickly child named Tara Singh. This is stated by Captain A. Mathews who visited Batala in 1808, and whose personal confidential servant also belonged to Batala, the headquarted of Sada Kaur. Mahtab Kaur died of grief in 1813, at the age of 30. Sada Kaur remained in captivity of Ranjit Singh for 8 years on a daily allowance of Rs. 10 only. She died in 1828. These two ladies gave up their lives for demanding recognition for Sher Singh and Tara Singh. No woman would sacrifice her life in the cause of an adopted son. It was after Sada Kaur's death that Ranjit Singh began to treat Sher Singh as his second son. He completely neglected Tara Singh who died in September, 1859 at Dasuha in Hoshiarpur district.

Regarding Sher Singh Osborne in 1838 wrote:

> "He is a supposed son of the Maharaja, though the latter strongly denies the paternity. He, however, grants him the privilege of a chair in his presence, an honour he shares with Kurruck Singh, the heir apparent to the throne, and Heera Singh, the son of the Minister, the only individuals of the Court who are so distinguished."

Professor Sita Ram Kohli writes:

> "Moreover, Sher Singh's paternity had been a matter for speculation. It was said that Rani Mehtab Kaur, being barren, adopted the baby of a dyer's wife and presented this infant, Sher Singh, to Ranjit Singh as

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their child. As against this, Sher Singh was fortified by the fact that the Maharaja had censured any who entertained the rumour casting doubt on his antecedents and entrusted him with distinguished civil and military commands."[1]

4. Multana Singh son of Ratan Kaur.

5 & 6. Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh, sons of Laya Kaur Peshaura Singh held the charge of the Attock fort for a number of years. The revenues from Sialkot and Murliwala including customs duty amounting to Rs. 34,000 in total were granted to Kashmira Singh and Multana Singh in jagir.

7. Dalip Singh was born to Jindan in September, 1838.

On 26 May, 1831, at Dinanagar, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala told Captain Wade that:

It was from the happy house of the great Sardar Khalsa Charat Singh that the benign son Khalsa Maha Singh Ji was born, and that it was from his blessed personality that the Maharaja Bahadur's birth took place, from the Maharaja the glorious Prince Kharak Singh was born, and from the latter Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh was born.... . But that in the house of the kindly Maharaja, by the grace of the immortal God, there were other princes as well.

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[1]*Sunset of the Sikh Empire,* 11-12.

Part Six

Portrait of the Sikh Lion of Lahore

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CHAPTER 32

Maharaja's Daily Durbar

*Ranjit Singh's Durbar**

Maharaja Ranjit Singh held his durbar in the Saman Burj or octagonal tower in the Lahore Fort or in Hazuri Bagh or in Shalamar Gardens or at Haqiqat Rae's *samadh* on Basant day or at Pul Twaif on the banks of the Hasli canal about 20 km from Lahore or at Dinanagar. Special durbars were also held on the days of Holi, Baisakhi, Dasahra and Diwali.

In mangnificence and grandeur few world courts could vie with Ranjit Singh's durbar. Even Diwan-e-Am in the Red Fort at Delhi in the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, minus its size and the Peacock Throne appeared not greater than the dazzling brilliance of Maharaja's court.

Ranjit Singh insisted on every courtier and official to keep long beards, to dress in the finest and most expensive material and to wear costly jewellery.

In January, 1832, Alexander Burnes and his companions were received by the Maharaja in such a fine tent "as if it was the tent of an angel and not of man." Burnes and Gerard were seated in golden chairs and the Maharaja held conversation with them for two hours.

Dinanagar was the summer capital of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In May, 1838 Osborne attended the durbar which he described thus: The floor was covered with rich shawl carpets. A gorgeous shawl canopy, embroidered with gold and precious stones, supported on golden pillars covered the hall. It was held in a garden. Every walk was lined with troops. Maharaja's courtiers occupied the whole space behind him. In front there were leading nobles, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, chiefs from Kabul and Kandhar, all blazing with gold and jewels, and dressed and armed in a

*All events described here are genuine.

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delightful variety of colour and fashion.

The Maharaja sat cross-legged in a golden chair. He wore simple, white clothes, without ornaments. He had a single string of enormous pearls round his waist, and the Koh-e-Nur on his arm. The mountain of light and his fiery eye both vied with each other for brilliancy. His chiefs all squatted on the floor round his chair. Only Dhian Singh stood behind his master. One hour was spent in desultory conversation. Then the Maharaja rose. He sprinkled sandalwood scent on the clothes of the mission. He embraced them and allowed them to leave with ceremonies.

Ali-ud-din described Maharaja's durbar thus: Carpets were spread. People came to pay respects. There was no Naqib. Anybody could come, utter Wah Guruji Ki Fatah, and sat anywhere he liked. There was no distinction of rank or position. There was vacant space in front of the Maharaja. Any person who wanted to say something would go there, would speak and would return to his place.

Beards' Exhibition

The Hungarian Honigberger told the Maharaja that the Emperor of Austria-Hungary invited people over 85 years of age every year from all over the Empire, washed their feet, entertained them to a sumptuous feast, and gave everyone a prize of some articles and cash according to their age.

Ranjit Singh took up the hint. He started holding a beard show and granted suitable rewards according to the length of their beards. Among the non-Sikhs Ratan Chand of Lahore won the first prize, and he was already known as Darhiwala.

1811–Forbearance

Maharaja: You are most welcome, Sardar Jodh Singh (Ramgarhia) Ji. You are just like my brother. Let us exchange turbans as a token of brotherly relationship.

Jodh Singh: Sarkar Alijah, kindly dispense with such honour in my case. I should consider myself lucky if allowed to keep my own turban on my head.

Maharaja smilingly: Be of good cheer and loyal.

Shaikh Sahib! zamana nazuk hai,
Donon hathon se tham lo dastar.

9 February, 1813–Pickles and Grapes

Sardar Hukma Singh Atariwala: Sarkar Daulatmadar! Kindly allow your

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humble servant to leave for home.

Maharaja: Missar Ji, bring a few jars of different kinds of pickles.

Beli Ram: They are here, Noble Sarkar.

Maharaja: Sardar Ji, take these jars, and you may leave for home at your pleasure.

Sardar: Thanks, Noble Sarkar, we all will relish them and will pray for Your Majesty's health and prosperity.

Maharaja: Sardar Karam Singh Ji, this box of grapes is for you.

Sardar Karam Singh Chahal: I feel highly grateful to Your Majesty. May you live long!

(Both the Sardars bowed and left.)

9 September, 1813–Marriage Proposal

A Jat from among the brothers of the Raja of Nilamgarh came to Amritsar with his family.

Sardar: Your Majesty, my wife and I have brought our beautiful daughter to be given in marriage to the Noble Sarkar.

Maharaja: I shall marry her after seeing her with my own eyes.

(To his khidmatgar, a personal attendant):

Ram Singh, bring the girl and her mother inside the fort in a palanquin.

(Ram Singh bowed and left.)

Ranjit Singh cast a glance at the girl from head to foot, while talking to her mother for one hour.

Maharaja: Ram Singh, leave these ladies at their derah, and give them Rs.100 for travelling expenses.

18 November, 1814–Amritsar, Apple Jam

Maharaja to a servant: Send 5,000 Afghan apples of the best variety to Kalian Singh Thanedar asking him to prepare jam and keep it in his custody.

The servant: Yes, Your Majesty, it will be done.

1820, Gujrat–The Rascal

Maharaja: Munshi, write an order to Diwan Dannu, and say that the Maharaja has given him the administration of the Gujrat country Order him to accept it, and to pay Rs. 5,000 *nazarana* (present) for it.

Munshi: Your Majesty, the Diwan refuses to accept it.

Maharaja: Just see the rascal; he does not accept it on account of the *nazarana*; take off Rs. 2,000.

Munshi: Your Majesty, the Diwan has agreed.

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Maharaja: Do you see the play of the rascal; Rs. 2,000 having been remitted, he now accepts it.

1822–A Pandit of Banaras

Attendant: Your Highness, a great pandit (scholar) has arrived from Banaras, deeply read, who has a stone with him; he says that whatever pain your highness may have will be cured by applying it.

Maharaja: Missar, saddle an elephant with a silver howdah, and bring the pandit on it directly.

Attendant: Maharaja, the pandit is a man of queer temper, and will not be thus brought.

Maharaja: Bring him by all means, and take Rs. 500 with you from the treasury.

Attendant: Very well, your Highness.

(The pandit arrives, and takes out the stone; the Maharaja rises, and rubs it on his face.)

Maharaja: Bring Rs.1,000, and put them at Pandit's feet, and give him also Rs. 10 a day for his expenses.

Pandit: I do not want any of your rupees. I have Mahadev's orders to return to Banaras when you are well. Do not hold your court for a day or two.

(After some days the Maharaja learns that the holy pandit has fallen in love with a dancing girl; and he is an impostor).

Maharaja: These are holy men, and are privileged to do such things if they like.

1823–Shalamar Gardens at Lahore.

The Maharaja was seated in a golden chair, surrounded by about a dozen of his ministers, all sitting on the floor. Several reporters at a distance, were catching every word and noting it.

1826–Indisposition

The Maharaja is ill, with a pain in his face.

An Attendant: Sarkar Daulatmadar, there is a famous Sayyid in the city who cured a severe pain in my leg by the touch of his hand.

Maharaja: Bring the Sayyid. Take an elephant, and bring him with all despatch.

(The Sayyid arrives.)

The Sayyid: Brother, may you be well, and carry on your government: may you prosper in the world!

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(The Sayyid gently rubs his hand on Maharaja's face, and applies some oil also.)

Maharaja: Missar, bring five bags of Rs.100 each, and lay them at the Sayyid's feet.

Sayyid: Sarkar Daulatmadar, I hope you will give me a sight of yourself tomorrow.

(The Sayyid makes his salaam and retires.)

Maharaja's Durbar at Amritsar, 1827

Captain Wade met the Maharaja in May, 1831. He writes: The place where the court was held (at his reception in 1827) was an open portico on the eastern side of the edifice in the centre of the Rambagh Garden. At each end of it there were lofty canopies hung on golden pillars and made of the richest shawls. Rich carpets of shawls were also spread on the ground. The front was on towards a canal of water supplying several large fountains, the spray of which diffused an agreeable freshness around the spot. The Raja sat in the recess of the portico on a large golden chair of a circular form. On the ground forming a semi-circle to the right and the left of the Raja sat sardars. The sardars were decorated with costly jewels and elegant dresses of yellow silk. Everyone of them had a shield and sword and some matchlocks. They had a very splendid appearance and it was impossible not to admire the order and regularity of the whole assembly, the deference with which the sardars treated the Maharaja and the courtesy they observed towards each other. There was no rude familiarity and confusion; everyone seemed to know his place and to be conscious of the station he filled.

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1828–Bedi

Attendant: Sarkar Alijah, there is a holy man who has one of Guru Nanak's *mala* or necklace of beads.

Maharaja: What, has he preserved it since that time? Bring here the holy man, and take my own elephant for him to come.

(The holy man arrives, unfolds the *mala* from numerous wrappers. The Maharaja salutes it, and applies it to his eyes, head and breast.)

Maharaja to his Munshi: Write a perpetual grant of a village worth a thousand rupees annually in the province of Wazirabad and give it to the holy man.

April, 1829–Hira Singh, born in 1820

Maharaja: Missar Ji, prepare a *sehra* worth Rs. 25,000 for Hira Singh, on

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the occasion of his marriage.

Missar Beli Ram: Sarkar Alijah, it will be done.

Maharaja: Missar Ji, besides keep ready Rs. 51,000 in cash, 5 jewels, 10 pieces of dress, 5 horses with gold trappings for our Farzand-e-khas (beloved son), Hira Singh.

Missar: Your Majesty's commands will be strictly followed.

Interview of Bellasis, 1831

Maharaja to his attendant: Call in the foreigner.

Bellasis entered, bowed and offered a *nazar* of Rs. 101.

The Maharaja half rose and greeted him with great courtesy.

Maharaja: Take your seat, Bellasis.

Bellasis sits on the floor on a carpet near his Majesty.

Maharaja: What is your name and name of your father? Which is your place of birth?How old are you?

Bellasis answered all questions and said: I am a European, not an Englishman.

Maharaja: What do you know? What can you do? What do you want? (All in one breath.)

Bellasis: Your Majesty! I can do anything. I am ignorant of nothing. Having heard the fame of your Majesty I have come from a far off country to offer my services.

Maharaja: Do you speak Persian?

Bellasis: Yes, my Lord. I have been sometime in Persia.

Maharaja: Can you build a fort? Can you cure a long standing disease? Can you cast a gun? Can you shoe a horse? Can you mend my watch, which has stopped?

Bellasis: All, through your Majesty's *iqbal*, is in the reach of this mortal, and what other men have done, what should prevent Bellasis from doing?

Maharaja: Shabash. Turning to Faqir Aziz-ud-din: Faqir, he is a bold jawan, this friend of yours.

Faqir: He is, Your Majesty, but try him, and you will find his merit exceeds his words. The King of Rum, the Shah of Persia, the Amirs of Sind, all asked him to join them as a brother. But he would devote his sword to none, but to the Lion of the Panjab.

Just then two nearly naked thieves were dragged in. They had stolen some eatables. They did not deny the charge. The nose of one and ears of the other were cut off and the bleeding culprits were driven out. All this took place in one or two minutes.

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Maharaja: Sharp work, Bellasis. We do not take life, but we punish.
Bellasis: But perhaps, they were led on by hunger, your Majesty. A dozen voices stirred to hush him, and the Faqir gave him an admonitory look.
Maharaja: Let him alone. I like plain speaking, and he is but naya jawan. You ride well, I hear, friend!
Bellasis: I have striven with a horse from my youth, Your Majesty.
Maharaja: Well, you frangis leap your horses. There is a fellow just entering who will show you the way over that fence.

(It was Nand Singh, a dashing, horseman. His horse failed to jump over the fence and fell heavily with his rider. Then Bellasis went forward. His horse cleared the barrier and the body of Nand Singh. In another instant he was at the feet of the Maharaja.)

Maharaja: Shabash Bellasis, you shall teach my lancers. You are a Colonel now in my service, and shall have a *khilat* on the spot. If you are but as bold in the field as in the garden, we shall soon be good friends.

A day shall be fixed for you again to attend, and you will then receive a parwanah (written order) of installing you in your new office, and instructions for your conduct. Your fortune is in the ascendant. Be prudent, and do not rashly mar it.

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(A *khilat* was then presented to him consisting of eleven pieces, which included a horse and accoutrements, a sword, a pair of shawls, a pearl necklace, a shawl chogha, and two pieces of fine muslin, with a bag containing a thousand rupees delivered to his attendants.)

1831 –Jacquemont, A Frenchman

Jacquemont, a Frenchman wrote in 1831:

"I have spent a couple of hours on several occasions conversing with Ranjit... His conversation is a nightmare. He is almost the first inqusitive Indian I have seen, but curiosity makes up for the apathy of his whole nation. He asked me a hundred questions about India, the English, Europe, Bonaparte, this world in general and the other one, hell and paradise, the soul, God, the devil, and a thousand things besides ... he has a large band of the loveliest girls of Kashmir and sufficient means to pay for a better dinner than anybody else in this country." He further writes:

Maharaja: What conquests can I undertake at present?
Jacquemont: Any country of Asia not already occupied by the English.

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Maharaja: But what province shall I first think of taking? Tibet. You have been there.

Jacquemont: Your Majesty would have only to send your Gorkha regiment, but that country is very poor.

Maharaja: What is the use of conquering such a country? I want lands which are rich and prosperous. Could I not have Sind?[1]

1831–Bara Rice

Maharaja: Nawab Sahib (Sultan Muhammad Khan)! We have heard a great deal about Bara rice. What is your opinion?

Sultan Muhammad Khan: Your Majesty, the Bara rice is admired the most. When being cooked its fragrance fills the whole house. Further, when cooked it grows longer, and its grains keep themselves apart. Its colour is red, but in taste it is remarkably sweet, balmy and delicious.

Maharaja: Is it grown all over in the valley of Bara river?

Sultan Muhammad: No, Your Majesty. It is cultivated on a particular piece of ground in the village of Sanja, just within the three tappas occupied by the Khalil tribe. I shall be glad to send it for the Noble Sarkar.

Maharaja: Yes, send it as much as you can, and we will count it in the tribute due to the Lahore Durbar.

Sultan Muhammad: Your commands are on my head and eyes (*basar-o-chashm*).

1832–Bannu Tank

Maharaja: Nikka Diwan, call Munshi Sarab Dayal.

Munshi: I am here, Sarkar Alijah.

Maharaja: Munshi, write an order to Raja Suchait Singh to march with 1,000 cavalry and 2,000 infantry, from Peshawar, and settle the affairs of Bannu Tank (a rebellious district), and write an order also to Fatah Singh Mann, to put himself under the Raja's orders, and not to disobey any of his commands.

1832–Wolff Joseph

In 1832 Wolff Joseph arrived at Lahore, and put up with General Allard. After his interview with Ranjit Singh he shaved his beard. A Sikh who stood nearby weepingly said, "Why have you cut off the ornament of man?" When the news reached Ranjit Singh, he summoned Wolff Joseph. On seeing him the Maharaja exclaimed: Ho, ho, ho! where have you left

[1]Gopal Singh, op. cit., p. 496.

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your beard?

Wolff Joseph: It is well taken care of in the house of your Majesty's general.

Maharaja: I shall cut off his nose, the first day I see the fellow.

11 April, 1834, Conversion to Sikhism

Pandit Hari Krishan: Sarkar-e-Alijah, I wish to become a Sikh and join your army.

Maharaja: You are welcome. Take pahul and you would be given command of some of the troops. Khidmatgar.

Attendant: I am here Sarkar-e-Ala.

Maharaja: Bring a plume set with pearls and Rs. 200.

Attendant: Here are the things, Singh Sahib.

Maharaja: Pandit, take these things. Report to us when you have taken pahul.

The young man takes the things, thanks the Maharaja, bows and departs. At home his father Pandit Madhusudan began to weep and cry. He loudly called it a misfortune. He complained to the Prime Minister, Raja Dhian Singh who consoled him. He counselled the boy to have pity on his father, but it was in vain. After sometime Hari Krishan presented himself before the Maharaja.

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Maharaja: Pandit, you are a capable young man. On your taking pahul you will become a Sardar. Your beard will add to your dignity and grace. As you belong to a noble family, you shall be appointed commanding officer of troops. Attendant.

Attendant: I am at your command, Noble Sarkar.

Maharaja: Bring a suit of clothes and Rs.100.

Attendant: Here are the things, Noble Sarkar.

Maharaja: Pandit, take these things. See me twice daily.Your star is in ascendency.

The pandit gracefully bows and leaves. Pandit Madhusudan calls on the Prime Minister who instructed the guards at the Deorhi not to allow the young man to meet the Maharaja.

26 November, 1835–The Chiefs and Their Sons

Maharaja: How is it the children of Khatris are capable and intelligent? Just see, Diwan Mohkam Chand, his son Moti Ram, his sons Ram Dayal and Kirpa Ram, all very able and fine.

On the contrary, the sons of our chiefs (including his own) are poor specimen of their fathers.

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(There is complete silence in the durbar. After a pause)

Maharaja: Yes the Khatris are always at home. They do not trust strangers and their servants, and do not allow them free entry into their houses. The chiefs "in the service of the Maharaja go to various directions leaving their womenfolk behind. Their khidmatgars carry on a different kind of work in their houses in their absence and so the children of the chieftains do not prove capable."[1]

February, 1836–Clergyman

The Padri (clergyman): Noble Sarkar! I have come to bid you farewell, as I am leaving for England.

Maharaja to an attendant: Bring Rs. 200 and a horse.

Attendant: Noble Sarkar, here is the money and the horse is standing there.

Maharaja: Padri Sahib, accept both these things as a farewell gift.

Padri: May Your Majesty live long and prosper![2]

1836–Reception of Baron Charles Hugel

Maharaja: Call Raja Dhian Singh.

Raja: I am here, Your Majesty.

Maharaja: Raja, send five of your orderlies, and write to every place, that a gentleman is coming to Lahore by the Attock road; give him Rs.100 at every stage, 20 maunds of flour, 2 maunds of rice, one maund of ghi, 50 fowls, 10 pots of milk and curd to wash his hair with, 500 eggs firewood, earthen pots, and whatever he may require: let him have a guard at every stage, Raja, this is your charge.

Raja: Truly spoken Your Majesty.

Maharaja: Missar, send Fattu Bhayya to call Jamadar Khushhal Singh.

The Jamadar arrives.

Maharaja: Jamadar, do you also as I have ordered the Raja, and write to your district that the gentleman may not be uncomfortable, and get also his certificates at every stage.

Tell the Commandant, Mian Sultan Muhammad, and Mirza Manda Ali, to fire eleven rounds from the garrison guns, and twenty-one from the field pieces, an hour before sunset, when gentleman arrives. And, Missar, send to Sukhraj, and tell him to keep two companies in readiness at Jahangir's tomb, as the gentleman's escort; and let the Singh regiment be in readiness outside the Taksali gate, to accompany the gentleman to

[1]*Umdat*, Eng. trans., 257.
[2]Ibid., 276.

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his quarters.

In the meantime the gentleman has arrived.

Maharaja: Missar, tell Kutba to call the ladies (dancers), give them Rs. 50 each out of the treasury, and order them to come dressed out.

Let Ali Khan receive Rs. 500, and tell him to have lamps ready in the Saman Bastion an hour before night. Let Sattar gardner be called, and order him to have an entertainment prepared for the gentleman in the Shala Gardens, and tell Beli Ram to have ready tomorrow, at the Shala Gardens, a pearl necklace, a pair of gold bracelets set with diamonds, an expensive pair of shawls, Rs. 500 for the gentleman's servants, and a present for each of his other men.

(After showing him the parade of his army, the Maharaja asks:)

Maharaja: Baron Sahib, what do you think of this army? Is it in a state to encounter a European force?

Hugel: The Sikhs have been long remarkable for their bravery; and the discipline now introduced must no doubt have rendered them quite equal to such an encounter.

Maharaja: With equal force!

Hugel: Doubtless.

Maharaja: You have seen the whole world, which country do you like best?

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Hugel: My own native land.

Maharaja: You have seen Kashmir. What do you think of it?

Hugel: Sickness and famine have of late years so depopulated it, that it must produce a revenue of small amount.

Maharaja: I have ordered Mihan Singh to give money to the poor.

Do you think he robs me?

Hugel: I do not think so.

Maharaja: Do you not think I should do well to remove him from the Government? He has no intellect.

Hugel: I think the Governor is a worthy man, and you will not easily find a better man. The country needs indulgence, in order that it may recover itself.

December, 1836–Wade

Maharaja: Is His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief coming to Lahore?

Wade: He will go to Shimla.

Maharaja: What troops has he with him?

Wade: Not many, and they will be left in various cantonments.

Maharaja: What are his objects in coming to this side from far off

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Calcutta?

Wade: To visit Shimla, the summer headquarters of the Government of India.

Maharaja: What is Mr. Pottinger doing in Sind?

Wade: He is trying to obtain facilities for the trade by the Indus.

1836–Mangoes

Maharaja: Sardar Hari Singh Ji, We understand there is a mango tree at Darband the fruit of which is reputed for its delicious flavour.

Hari Singh Nalwa: Your Majesty! Darband is the headquarter of our great enemy Paindah Khan. Besides the place is situated on the bank of river Indus amidst high cliffs difficult of access. Yet your humble servant will try to procure its fruit.

Herbert Edwardes says the whole fruit of this tree was sent to Lahore in *bahngis*.

1838–Kabul

The Maharaja is seated in a chair with silver arms and legs.

An Attendant: News from Kabul has arrived, Your Majesty.

The Maharaja: Bring in the messenger.

Attendant: He is here Sarkar-e-Alijah.

Maharaja: Call Faqir Aziz-ud-din.

Attendant: Will you please come in, Faqir Sahib.

Maharaja: Is the letter from Sardar Dost Muhammad, or from anyone else?

Faqir: It is from the Sardar, Your Majesty

Maharaja: Well, read what's in it.

Faqir reads: "To Maharaja Ranjit Singh, King of Lahore. May your name be great! Twenty camel loads of fruit, two horses, and a sword are here for the Noble Sarkar. Will Your Majesty deign to accept them?"

Maharaja: Attendant, call in the Missar.

Attendant: Your Majesty, Missar Ji is here.

Missar Beli Ram: What orders, Your Majesty?

Maharaja: Missar Ji, send to Dost Muhammad an elephant with a silver howdah, a Sindian matchlock, a Gujrati sword, and ten pairs of shawls. Let them be fine, and of different colours; and Faqir, do you write a word and say, that his road and mine is the same, and that he must make some good arrangements by which he may live peaceably, or else the Maharaja intends to march against him after the Dasahra; and tell him not to say he was not forewarned.

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Faqir: What Your Majesty ordered is written.
Maharaja: Very well; send it by Vakil.

29 May, 1838, Camp Dinanagar–Osborne

Maharaja Ranjit is sitting cross-legged in a golden chair, dressed in simple white, wearing no ornaments but a single string of enormous pearls round his waist, and the celebrated Koh-e-Nur on his arm. His chiefs are all squatted on the floor round his chair, with the exception of Dhian Singh, who always remained standing behind his master.

It is hardly possible to give an idea of the ceaseless rapidity with which his questions flowed, or the infinite variety of subjects they embraced.

Do you drink wine? How much? Did you taste the wine which I sent you yesterday? How much of it did you drink?

What artillery have you brought with you? Have they got any shells? How many?

Do you like riding on horseback? What country horses do you prefer?

Are you in the army? Which do you like best, cavalry or infantry?

Does Lord Auckland drink wine? How many glasses? Does he drink it in the morning?

What is the strength of the Company's army? Are they well disciplined?

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1st June, 1838–Dinanagar, Morning Ride

Osborne accompanied Ranjit Singh for some distance on his usual morning excursion.

Maharaja: Have your ever seen any Burmese troops?
Osborne: No, Your Highness.
Maharaja: I have heard that they fight well, and beat your Sipahis.
Osborne: They fight well behind their stockades, but cannot face us on a fair field. Gorkhas are, I think, a braver race and better soldiers.
Maharaja: True, they are fine fellows. I have got a regiment of them at Lahore which I will show you.
How many troops have you got in this country altogether?
Osborne: About two hundred thousand.
Maharaja: So I have been told; but you cannot bring that number into the field at once, or at anyone place.
Osborne: Certainly not; it is unnecessary. Twenty or at the most, thirty thousand British troops can march from one end of India to the other, and no power in the country can stop them.
Maharaja: You are fine fellows. How many Frenchmen can an Englishman beat?

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Osborne: At school, in England, the boys are always taught to consider themselves equal to three Frenchmen.
Maharaja: And how many Russians?
Osborne: The French beat the Russians, and we beat the French.
Maharaja: If the Russians cross the Indus what force would you bring against them?
Osborne: Quite enough to drive them back, with your Highness for our ally.
Maharaja: Wah! Wah! so we will.

(It is quite impossible to recollect the number of his questions with sufficient accuracy to write them down; but those I do remember I have written in his own words.–Osborne)

June, 1838, Dinanagar–Breakfast

At six o'clock in the morning Captain M'Gregor and Osborne rode with the Maharaja for some miles, gossiping and chatting, and endeavouring in vain to satisfy his insatiable curiosity upon subjects of the most opposite nature.
Maharaja: Are you fond of riding?
Osborne: Yes.
Maharaja: Are you fond of shooting?
Osborne: Very.
Maharaja: Have you been out lately?
Osborne: Yes; about two months ago.
Maharaja: Where?
Osborne: In the Terai and Dehra Dun.
Maharaja: What did you shoot?
Osborne: Twelve tigers.
Maharaja: Are you married?
Osborne: No.
Maharaja: Why don't you marry?
Osborne: I can't afford it.
Maharaja: What horse is that you are on?
Osborne: An Arab.
Maharaja: Where did you get him?
Osborne: He was given to me.
Maharaja: How long were you out shooting?
Osborne: Fourteen days.
Maharaja: Do you like my wine?
Osborne: Yes; but it is very strong.

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Maharaja: Have you breakfasted?
Osborne: Not yet.
Maharaja: Then we will breakfast here.

"And in a small grove of trees a beautiful shawl tent was immediately pitched, with an awning supported by silver poles, and a rich shawl carpet spread; and in less than five minutes, we found ourselves seated on golden chairs opposite Runjeet, who remained in his litter supported on the bearers' shoulders. Five minutes more sufficed to produce breakfast. Runjeet's table was formed by one of his servants standing up close to his litter with his back towards him, and then stooping till his shoulders were on a level with its floor. A tray containing different sorts of curry, rice, sweetmeats, and milk, was then placed upon the man's shoulders; and the Maharaja commenced his breakfast with an apparently good appetite. The different eatables were served up in the nicest and coolest little vessels (*dumas*), about the size of tea-cups, made of fresh green leaves, so closely sewn together as to be capable of retaining liquids, and beautifully cool and clean. A tray was brought to M'Gregor and myself, upon each of which was arranged about six of these little cups, containing different sorts of curry, rice, curds, and some remarkably fat quails, with all the bones taken out, and highly spiced and seasoned. We set to work with our fingers, (following our host's example,) and though from want of practice not quite so expert, contrived to make a very hearty breakfast, which we wound up with a delicious draught of iced sherbet."

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28 June, 1838, Lahore, Parade ground

Osborne, took his usual ride this morning to the parade ground, and found Runjeet Singh inspecting a brigade of infantry and some guns.

Maharaja: What number of troops does the Emperor of Russia keep in pay?

Are they good soldiers? Can the English beat them? Can the Spanish beat them? etc. etc.

Osborne: The French have often beaten them. and we have beaten the French quite as often.

Maharaja: If they wished to invade India, what number of men would they bring across the Indus?

Osborne: Fifty thousand would be the smallest number they would attempt an advance with, and probably one hundred thousand would be sent.

Maharaja: What should you do if they were actually to attempt an

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invasion?

Osborne: Join your Highness with 30,000 British troops, which with 70,000 of your Sikhs, would be quite sufficient to drive them back again.

Maharaja: *Wah, wah*, so we will. Do you wish them to come?

Osborne: Of course, I do; it would be *bara tamasha* (great fun).

Maharaja: So do I, I am sure we could beat them. Have they much money?

Osborne: No, very little.

Maharaja: Then there would be nothing but fighting; no plunder?

Osborne: Certainly not.

Maharaja: Perhaps it will be better if they do not come, after all.

8 July, 1838, Lahore, Osborne–Amazons

Ranjit Singh asked many questions about the proficiency and courage, as soldiers, of the different castes of natives of Hindustan, and remarked, that he considered the Sikhs, the bravest nation of the east, adding.

Maharaja: Do you think I am right?

Osborne: Hardly; if they are as brave a nation as you represent them to be, how happens it that your Highness at the commencement of your career found so little difficulty in conquering all the other Sikh chiefs, and reducing them with few superior forces to such abject obedience as you did?

Maharaja: Ah! that was my destiny; it was written on my forehead, and must have come to pass. My disciplined troops, too, gave me an immense superiority over all contemporaries.

Do you find more difficulty in keeping up the discipline of your European regiments in this country than in England?

Osborne: Our discipline is always the same wherever we may be; and with good officers, change of country or climate should make no difference in the discipline or efficiency of our army.

Maharaja: True; I get on very well with all mine; but there is one regiment I cannot manage; (with a laugh); they give me more trouble than all the rest of my army put together, and those are the Amazons. How do you manage them at home?

Osborne: We have nothing of the sort with us.

Maharaja: I hope Lord Auckland will think them in good order, and I trust he will like to see them.

Osborne: No doubt.

Maharaja: I have got some beautiful recruits from Kashmir on the road,

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and I will have it perfect them before his visit; but they are very difficult to manage.

Osborne: Perhaps if your Highness would allow me to take with me to Shimla the non-commissioned officers of the corps and the new recruits which you expect, by the time Lord Auckland goes to visit you, I might be able to drill them into something like order.

Maharaja: Would you like to take them with you?

Osborne: Very much.

Maharaja: No; I can't do that; I have not seen them myself yet.

Osborne: Your Highness will find if they remain here they will be corrupted by communication with the rest of the corps, and you may rely upon it, the best play will be to make them over to me.

Maharaja: Do you think so? Well, I will think about it. Is Lord Auckland married?

Osborne: No.

Maharaja: What! has he no wives at all?

Osborne: None.

Maharaja: Why doesn't he marry?

Osborne: I don't know.

Maharaja: Why don't you marry?

Osborne: I can't afford it.

Maharaja: Why not? Are English wives very expensive?

Osborne: Yes; very.

Maharaja: I wanted one myself sometime ago, and wrote to the Government about it, but they did not send me one.

Osborne: It would be difficult to find one in this country that would suit Your Highness.

Maharaja: Are there any in England?

Osborne: Plenty.

Maharaja: Ah! I often wish for one.

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CHAPTER 33

Fun-filled Features

Like other oriental kings and princes, Ranjit Singh was fond of wine, women, music and dance. In sharp contrast to his own appearance, Ranjit Singh most passionately loved beauty in men, women, animals, plants and unanimate objects. To him 'a thing of beauty was a joy for ever'. Ordinary beauty did not attract him. It must be superb. If, in addition to external beauty, one possessed internal beauty of mind and intellect, the Maharaja became fantastically fond of him or her. In this category fell three Dogra rajas of Jammu among men, and Moran, Gul Begam and Kaulan among women. His inner harem consisted of mainly political wives. They were externally satiated, but internally starved. The outer harem contained only personal wives and concubines. They were internally satiated and externally gratified modestly, some members of the latter class, in form and figure, in music and dance, were the envy of God Indra presiding at his court in seventh heaven. In the company of these fairies, Ranjit Singh never became a prisoner of the soft delights of his inner harem. The fairy land supplied him the spice of life.

Hira Singh

Hira Singh was the son of Raja Dhian Singh, Prime Minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja loved him as his son, conferred upon him the title of 'Raja' while he was a lad in his teens. He was allowed to sit in a chair in the public durbar along with Prince Kharak Singh. Raja Dhian Singh kept standing on the back of the Maharaja to listen to his orders and never sat in his presence. Captain Osborne was with the Maharaja in 1838 at Dinanagar and Lahore. About Hira Singh he observed:

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"His influence over Runjeet is extraordinary, and though acquired in a manner which in any other country would render him infamous forever, here is universally looked upto and respected.

Osborne seems to have gathered information from the servants and dancing girls supplied to him by the Maharaja. Ranjit Singh could never be under any circumstances so mean as to call Hira Singh publicly his favourite son, *Farzand-e-Khas*, and in privacy subject him to paederasty. If he were so inclined, his dancing girls, the choicest beauties of Asia, were there to satisfy his lust."

Osborne further wrote about Hira Singh:

"If report speaks true, he is frequently his companion in his licentious orgies even in the *zenana*, some months ago he succeeded in abducting one of his favourite inmates, but Ranjit Singh took no notice of it, though at the time it created a great deal of disgust among his people, and occasioned a quarrel between Hira Singh and his father Raja Dhian Singh."

Ranjit Singh loved him as a son for the following reasons:

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1. Hira Singh was the son of his Prime Minister. By patronising this boy he could strengthen the loyalty and devotion of his father.
2. Hira Singh was a very handsome boy, and Ranjit Singh was an intense lover of beauty in everything.
3. Hira Singh was very intelligent, thoughtful and ready witted.
4. The runaway girls could not be kept by Hira Singh permanently. Ranjit Singh was extremely liberal-minded, and he took a lenient view on the part of this young man of eighteen, and the girl of fourteen or fifteen an age when folly is greater than wisdom.

Wine

Ranjit Singh wished to be a Great Mughal, and surpassed them in his wines. They were prepared from specified fruit, such as Kabul grapes, currants, gooseberry, orange, large red Kashmir apples, mixed with powdered pearls and gems. Ranjit Singh's wines were stronger than brandy. In 1832, Ranjit Singh asked Alexander Burnes whether wine drinking was best before or after meals, and laughed hearily when Burnes recommended both.

Emily Eden, sister of Lord Auckland, Governor-General of India in

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1838 wrote:

> Ranjeet produced some of his wine, a sort of liquid fire, that none of our strongest spirits approach, and in general Europeans cannot swallow more than a drop of it.

She further wrote that Ranjit began drinking that horrible spirit which he poured down like water. He insisted on my just touching it, and one drop of it actually burnt the outside of my lips. I could not possibly swallow it.

Ranjit Singh always praised drinking. His love for wine was so great that he condemned those books which preached against it. His one eye was always inflamed under the effect of opium or wine. Wine was prepared for himself alone. It was not available for sale for any price, even when offered enormous price of one gold mohar for a small bottle.

At his drinking parties two or three prettiest Kashmirian girls attended upon himself and his European guests. He then gave way "to every species of licentious debauchery."[1]

At these drinking bouts, sweets, fruits and fat quails stuffed with all sorts of spices were offered to eat, and to allay thirst only wine, "abominable liquid fire" was available.[2]

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At the time of forming the Tripartite Treaty, Macnaughten brought English wines such as port, claret, hock, champagne, etc. Ranjit Singh liked whisky only.

The common people took wine prepared from sugarcane molasses and the bark of babul tree. The sardars had domestic distillaries where spirits were prepared according to individual tastes.*

Courtesans

In Panjab the number of male population was always larger than that of females. Hence the unmarried men wanted women and wives for household work as well as for progeny. They were common men of ordinary means and were satisfied with second rate women and girls. Such women once sold passed from hand to hand, each successive purchaser turning into a seller after sometime. Only rarely did a master keep a slave girl permanently. The reason was that they had got full training in

[1]Osborne, p. 190.
[2]Ibid.
**Chaska jise yeh par gaya, jata hai phir kahan,*
Adat jise yeh par gai, phir chhut-ti nahin.

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the evil arts and practices of a courtesan. Even when owned by a master, they maintained their connection with local Kanjars. Sometimes they openly led the life of a common prostitute, defying their masters and absconding from their houses. In many cases they practised the old profession clandestinely. The fact was they had got accustomed to that sort of life, and could not get rid of their old habit. Emperor Muhammad Shah several times punished his dancing girl queen, mother of crown prince Ahmad Shah, for infidelity.

In the other category there were pretty women who adopted the profession of prostitutes. The charges of a woman of common-place features and colour, and who had passed the meridian of life were one rupee, or even less in those days. Their customers were villagers and poor people of towns and cities. A pretty woman in her twenties charged from one to two rupees.

There was another class of women prostitutes who possessed beautiful face and figure, were below twenty, and could sing and dance and possessed seductive art. They were clandestinely visited by government servants like clerks and subordinate officials and rich landlords and others. They were often engaged to give musical and dancing performances on the occasions of marriages or special functions. Some of them were sold to do household work in rich families.

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On top of them there was the pick of physical beauty, everything symmetrical, sweet voice, and delicate hands and feet. Their training began at the age of three and continued for 8 or 9 years. They were reserved for kings, princes and ministers. The highest families sold off their slave girls when they considered them of little use or when they could strike a good bargain. A slave girl was sold by a wife of Sultan Muhammad Khan Barakzai, Ranjit Singh's governor of Peshawar.

They were not always stolen, kidnapped or purchased children. In many cases they were the daughters or near relatives of Kanjars and dancers.

Kanjars

The sale and purchase of girls and women was called *bardah faroshi.* A special class of people carried on this profession. They were called Kanjars or pimps. They divided their own daughters into two groups, one to be married among their own tribe, and the other to meet the requirements of the general public. They also procured girls of other people either with money or by enticement. If a girl refused to become a harlot, she was chained in wooden fetters, thrown inside a dark cell and left without

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water and food. For her obstinacy she was put to death. Prostitution was started at the age of ten.

The author of *Tarikhe-e-Makhzan-e-Panjab* condemns the Kanjars most strongly. They liked a girl who earned to her full capacity day and night. Some of the girls were so cunning that they ruined a simpleton completely. Among the visitors there were some who eloped with a girl along with her ornaments and Kanjars remained helpless. On seeing a Kanjar or Kanjari the people uttered *lahaul.*

Causes of Slavery

The half-starved people of Kangra hills were willing to dispose of their children. Most of them had not seen the face of a silver coin. The agents of Kanjars or pimps depicted very tempting pictures of the future life of their daughters. As a result of the drain of girls from the hills polyandry became a regular feature in some areas. Even in the Panjab this practice existed to some extent. The main sources of supply consisted in Shimla hills, Kangra and Chamba hills, Jammu and Kashmir. The Pawindah traders and merchants brought Turki, Irani, Afghan and Kafir girls for sale in India. In beauty and behaviour the Kafir girls were considered the best. Delhi, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Lahore and Rohtas were the great centres of slave trade. In the city and province of Delhi, Sir Charles Metcalfe, as British Resident, stopped sale and purchase of slave girls in 1812.

J. Wolff who travelled in Kashmir stated that women were sold and purchased there like loaves of bread. Jacquemont another visitor to Kashmir wrote in 1831 that Kashmir had been drained of its beauties. His servant Shaikh Badar Bakhsh bought six beautiful girls in Kashmir for himself as concubines. Vigne who visited Kashmir three times noted that the girls of Wattah tribe were sold as concubines in the Panjab.

In Amritsar the number of prostitutes was about 600. All of them were Muslims real or converted. At Rohtas out of 100 houses 50 belonged to harlots. Coley found innumerable prostitutes at Hoshiarpur. It is said that in the famine of 1833-34 in Kashmir Panjab was flooded with Kashmiri girls, and every town had plenty of slave girls and child prostitutes. Their price ranged from Rs. 15 to Rs. 200. The general price was from Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 per foot of height. Europeans also bought Kashmiri girls. General Ventura had fifty concubines. The dancing girls of General Avitabile formed a good corps.

Ranjit Singh gave the red light area full protection. On 9 July, 1816, the dancing girls of Lahore complained that his troops created disturbances

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in their derah. The Maharaja promised to punish them.

Gulabi or Rosy or rose-limbed girl, an old dancing girl, whom H.M.L. Lawrence addressed as mother, told her story of misery and shame. She was a Rajput girl of Jammu hills. She was captured as a young girl by some Sikhs. She was ruthlessly used. She said:

> "Before womanhood had fairly grown upon me, I was a withered, hopeless, broken-hearted creature, ashamed to return to my father's house, even should I succeed in evading the watchfulness of my keepers, and soon disregarded, even despoiled, and thrown aside for another and a later victim, ... I was as a worn out garment, parted with to an old *kanchani,* as payment for the services of her squad at a festival."

H.M.L. Lawrence, the Deputy Commissioner of Firozpur in 1839, and de facto king of the Panjab in 1846, observes:

> "In no country in the east does prostitution appear to be so much legalised as in the Punjab, nor does it anywhere exist to so great and unblushing an extent."[1]

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How could Panjab's virile bachelors control themselves when her markets were flooded with rose-limbed girls from the north-west?

In 1836 Ranjit Singh, under pressure of British authorities abolished slavery in his kingdom. But the contingent of the dancing girls was not disbanded.

Dancing Girls in General

A prostitute who combined with her profession music and dance was known as a dancing girl. A man who enjoyed her music, dance and body, assisted by another dancing girl and six musicians, usually paid two rupees. With bells fastened to their legs, they moved slowly in a circle. Their feet pointed inwards. The musicians played upon the stringed instruments and drums. George Forster noted that the rich merchants of Jammu were fondly attached to dancing girls, and some of them dissipated their entire wealth, and were reduced to beggary. *Tarikh-e-Lahore* states that every chief had a large number of dancing girls in his service. Mohan Lal Kashmiri spent Rs. 300 a month on dancing girls to entertain him at meal times. Besides he had about 18 wives. Mohan Lal wrote in 1836 that

[1] *Adventures,* I, 138-41.

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the dancing girls of Delhi were extremely delicate, and were adorned with rich robes. They could not stand the pains which the dancing girls of Multan took while dancing. Their dance resembled the match of wrestlers. The remuneration paid to them was only one-third of the sum given in Delhi.

Ranjit Singh's Dancing Girls

Ranjit Singh had a large number of dancing girls for his own entertainment as well as for that of his European visitors. Towards the close of his reign their number was about 150. They were obtained mainly from Kashmir and Panjab hills. Some of them came as a part of annual tribute. They possessed enchanting beauty, sweet smiles, melodious voice, bewitching movements and were fully trained in the art of seduction. At Maharaja's court, they were so well looked after that they attained perfection in ravishing the hearts of onlookers. They were magnificently dressed and loaded with precious jewellery. The Maharaja granted them revenue free villages. One dancing girl Kaulan (Lotus) was the owner of seven good villages. They were provided with free food, lodging, clothes, etc.

Every public durbar began with their songs and dances. On festival days they sang in honour of the festival and gave dancing performance, representing the spirit of the festival. The best places selected by Ranjit Singh for his drinking bouts, dance and music were the Shalamar Gardens, and the banks of the Hasli canal, generally at Pul Twaif.

The Maharaja mixed with them freely. On 15 December, 1811, Sunday, he went into the mosque of Wazir Khan and seated on a high place to see the marriage ceremony of the son of a dancing girl. All the other dancing girls came on elephants dressed in fine garments. On entering the mosque they began to dance. The Sarkar sent for wine and drank with them. On the night of 21 February, 1814, Sarkar enjoyed the dance of his dancing girls and sprinkled lac dye on them.

During Tours

The Maharaja had built for himself a big carriage drawn by six fine horses. It had a room and a verandah. Ranjit Singh used to sit in the verandah. The room could accommodate 20 dancing girls. They were to amuse the Maharaja during his journeys. The coach men were dressed like English grooms.

At Kapurthala on 10 November, 1831, Maharaja's girls gave a performace of songs and dances. The state chronicler, Sohan Lal, says their revelry became an envy of paradise. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia made Maharaja drink

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with his own hands.[1]

On 6 February, 1832, the Maharaja went to see the parade of the troops of Campu-e-Mualla along with dancing girls dressed like men. They gave a performance of singing and dancing with great skill. The Sarkar rewarded them with Rs. 500.

Baron Charles Hugel's Remarks

Baron Charles Hugel had travelled from Calcutta to Attock as well as through Panjab hills, Jammu and Kashmir. He had attended performances of dancing girls at various places. He found the Panjab girls the best in the whole of India in the clearness of their voice, precision in their steps, whiteness of colour, symmetry of form, regularity of their teeth, charm of their countenance, and beauty of their hands and feet. He says that according to European standard the dancing girls from Kashmir were the prettiest with their fair and florid complexions and symmetrical various part of the body.

Hugel did not appreciate their dress. It did not display their figure at best. It consisted of coloured silk trousers, fitted tightly below, and fastened round the waist by a band and tassels hanging low up to the knees. Over the trousers they wore a tunic or *ghagri* of white muslin reaching half way down the legs. A shawl was put on the body. This was their home dress when not dancing. While dancing they wore a very wide, a gold-threaded garment of various colours, covering them from shoulders to ankles.

Their epic poems were always sung seated. The motion of the dancers was indicative of the vivacity of a narrative. The only songs which required dancing as a part of them, were those of a jocular character. The joke bordered on the verge of impropriety without overstepping it. Their greatest beauty was the delicacy of their hands and feet. The freedom and grace of their actions were inimitable.

Hugel observed that Maharaja's dancing girls consumed "incredible quantity of spirituous liquors without becoming intoxicated." They drank strongest brandy without the least effect.

About their food Hugel writes: A repast of about 100 lbs. of boiled rice, with butter and sweetmeats, fruit, pastry, twelve boxes of grapes, baskets of organges, pears, apples, etc. were eaten by the dancers. They ate while squatting on a carpet over which a cotton cloth was spread.

The dancers were generally carried in covered vehicles drawn by oxen, and usually escorted by a party of armed police.

[1]*Umdat*, vol. III, pt. I, 110; Suri's Eng. trans., 109.

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Emily Eden's Comments

Emily Eden, sister of Lord Auckland, has made a number of interesting observations. On 25 February, 1838, at Delhi, she remarked: In the evening we went to a nautch at Colonel Skinner's. His house was fitted up in the native fashion, and he had all the best singers and dancers in Delhi. They acted passages out of Vishnu and Brahma's lives, and sang Persian songs. One little fat nautch girl sang a sort of passionate song to G. with little meaning smiles, which I think rather attracted his Lordship. The dancing was very slow and very dull, but the dresses and ornaments were beautiful.

Sabathu, 2 April, 1838

Emily Eden wrote that people might abuse nautching, but it always amused me extremely. The girls hardly moved about at all, but their dresses and attitudes were so graceful I liked to see them.

Emily Eden saw some of the public dancing girls in the bazar at Lahore. Some of them were very pretty and wore beautiful ornaments. "But it is not lawful to look at them even for sketching purposes, and indeed Mr. N., one of the magistrates, has removed them all from the main street." (Anarkali Bazar)

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At his drinking parties "he generally orders the attendance of all his dancing girls, whom he forces to drink his wine, and when he thinks them sufficiently excited uses all his powers to set them by the ears, the result of which is a general action, in the course of which they tear one another almost to pieces. They pull one another's nose and ear rings by main force and sometimes even more serious accidents occur; Ranjit sitting by encouraging them with the greatest delight, and exclaimed to his guests, *"Burra tomacha, burra tomacha"*, (great fun).

Osborne praises one dance. A group of young dancing Kashmiri girls, not more than 12 years of age displayed a dance rattling with wooden sticks, dancing slowly and peacefully. It was considered "both pretty and singular." At the end of entertainment the Maharaja offered his English guests to pick up any girls they liked best and could keep them as long as they liked.

Not only the Maharaja but chiefs also kept dancing girls for their amusement and spent a lot of money on their maintenance. Their wealth and status were judged by the number and character of the festive entertainments they were able to give to their friends and associates.

Diwan Jawahar Mal spent a lot of money on dancing girls. Hari Singh son of Diwan Mul Raj Nazim of Pind Dadan Khan, spent Rs. 400 per

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mensem on keeping dancing girls.

Emily Eden in 1838, attended a dance of Maharaja's dancing girls. They were dressed in gold brocades, some purple and some red with long floating golden scrafs. Most of them were ugly, but one was the prettiest and most graceful. I ever saw. "I will send a little coloured sketch of her." She with another girl danced slowly round with their full draperies floating round them, for one quarter of an hour without stopping. All the time while singing and dancing, they were making flowers out of some coloured scarfs they wore. When they finished their performance, a bunch of beautiful flowers was ready. They presented it to us with unforgettable grace. "The whole thing was like a dream, it was so curious and unnatural."

Some Fascinating Flowers of Flesh of the Lahore Durbar

Out of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's platoon of 150 dancing girls only thirteen eminent singers and dancers could be picked up in different contemporary works: Banno, Dhanno, Gul Begam, Heloise, Jugnu, Kairan, Kaulan (Lotus), Maqish, Moran, Nabho, Pahro, Sabhu and Sabran. The author of *Tarikh-e-Lahore* calles Gul Begam, Jugnu, Kaulan and Moran as the most famous dancing girls of the Lahore durbar. All of these gave performance of singing and dancing on one occasion or the other. Of these three, Moran and Gul Begam were regularly married by the Maharaja. They afterwards never appeared in the public to demonstrate their art. Kaulan who seems to be of Hindu Rajput origin, voluntarily perished in flames with the corpse of Ranjit Singh. The other two were Muslim girls and retained their religious character even after marriage. No European ever met Moran, though Gul Begam's performance had been seen by some of them. As regards the other dancing girls, they gave almost daily performances, and were presented to his European guests. They were retained at court up to the age of 18 or 20. Afterwards they were sent on their jagirs. By that time they had considerably faded and were not considered fit to be retained at the court of Lahore.

Tirya joban chhai varhe,
Ghori dah salah:
Mard da joban sada rahe,
Jai mile masalah.

Banno and Dhanno

On 14 January, 1835, Sohan Lal wrote that Raja Ajit Singh of Ladwa

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was provided with entertainment. Dancing girls of great beauty and winsome manners, dressed in varied coloured garments stood drawn in lines to produce the music of David. Along with mined meat sausages, the cup-bearers offered cups filled with wine to the brim. Dancing girls named Banno and Dhanno melted the hearts by their songs and tunes. The Maharaja granted them Rs. 200.

Gul Begam

Honigberger says that Gul Begam had been a *kanchani* or a dancing girl for a few years in the service of Ranjit Singh. She was an expert in the art of ingratiating herself with her patron. Ranjit Singh publicly married her at Amritsar. Honigberger attended their marriage, and wrote that the Maharaja "cared not for public opinion, deeming that a sovereign ought to have the highest authority and an independent will." She did not follow her religion strictly, as she drank spirits and ate pork.

Heloise

Hugel took notice of Heloise and her aunt. He was struck by their enthusiastic expression of bewitching smiles. Each wore ornaments worth from 10,000 to 12,000 rupees. Their clothes were sumptuous in proportion. Over them they had a Kashmiri shawl valued at Rs. 1,000. On account of the name of the girl, it appears that both of them were from Kafiristan brought by Pawindah merchants. Mohan Lal Kashmiri who had one Kafir wife rated the Kafir girls as most beautiful and most innocent in women's art and part.

Jugnu

Hugel witnessed a performance of dancing girls. Among them was a 13-year-old girl Jugnu. While singing and dancing she cut jokes and thoroughly amused the listeners. She made a European, named Forni as the object of her fun. She levelled her jests at his grey beard and cap.

Kairan

Hugel says that Ranjit Singh declared Kairan the most beautiful girl at Lahore. The Maharaja selected her to give performance on the occasion of his meeting with Lord William Bentinck at Rupar. She was then 15 years old. She gave two performances. The first was given on 26 October, 1831, a song 'Motianwala Banna' (Hail, pearl bedecked bridegroom). Her voice was extremely soft, sweet, serene and syrupy. With rare combination of bewitching face, hands and feet, enchanting carriage, captivating grace,

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she moved with slow steps singing and dancing from one end to the other. While returning she stopped before Lord William Bentinck, knelt down in an impressive pose, and sang:

Thou art my soul; thou art my world;
I who please thee here am thy slave.

Then she threw herself at his feet. Her features lighted up as if she was expecting a reply. Clasping his knee with both hands, she suddenly stood up with the exclamation:

But thou art silent; thy heart is of stone;
It is cold for me; it will never be mine.

She moved away, her hands raised her, head thrown back, her face showing despair and grief, eyes drowned in sorrow, sobbing out the words, expressing mental distress and physical exhaustion.

The movements of the musicians behind her on their instruments, slow and sharp in tune with the movements of the singer and dancer, continuous ebb and flow of melody, the soft, slow music, becoming louder and quicker mingled to create an atmosphere of self-forgetfulness for the listeners, and of desire and despondency of the singer. She moved rapidly from one end of the room to the other. The Governor-General and the entire audience were enthralled. He gave the girl Rs. 1,000.

Woh ga rahi thi, ham the chup,
Ankhon se ki kitni baten.

Kairan had specialized in peacock dance which was superb. No other girl in Ranjit Singh's squad could imitate her. In summer the Maharaja lived at Dinanagar surrounded by vast mango gardens. Some of the branches laden with fruit were hanging down into the courtyard of the Maharaja's dancing girls. In hot weather ripe mangoes fell with a thud, and these girls often quarrelled over the fallen fruit. In the thickest and highest branches of these trees there lived many peacocks and peahens. In a state of emotional excitement and ecstasy the peacock danced on the ground with its lovely feathers of variegated hues. It is the most beautiful dance of a bird to win the heart of its spouse. The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan was so much fascinated at its sight that he prepared the world famous Peacock Throne bearing the following Persian couplet:

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Agar firdaus bar ru-e-zamin ast,
Hamin asto, hamin asto, hamin ast.
(If the paradise is on this earth,
It is here, it is here, it is here.)

These girls often saw peacocks dancing. But its captivating spell touched the very depth of Kairan's heart. She made up her mind to imitate it. She practised standing on her arms against a wall, and without any support. Then in that very posture she began to move from one end of the hall to the other. After continuous practice she could remain in that position without a fall for nearly twenty minutes. When this came to the notice of the Maharaja he gave her every encouragement.

The peacock in its dance dropped some of its feathers. Kairan picked them up, and tying them to her close-fitted trousers she imitated the peacock. This dance accompanied by musicians' tunes produced on their instruments was declared by everybody magnificent, gorgeous, sumptuous, and rather unearthly.

At one function at Rupar in 1831, the Maharaja's dancing girls sang and danced drinking wine. The Maharaja sprinkled lac dye *(gulal)* on the face of the Governor-General and other Englishmen. He then threw it on the faces of the girls. The Englishmen joined the Maharaja in the sport of colour. English ladies listened to music, saw dance and drank wine. The Maharaja put a pearl necklance round the neck of Lady William Bentinck and offered her valuable presents of pearls, jewellery and clothes. The Governor-General's daughter and other ladies were also given costly presents. The Governor-General placed a painted and printed cloth over Kairan who had perfomed the peacock dance wonderfully well.

Kairan sana the Motianwala song with dancing before Hugel in 1836. On seeing it he wrote that he would never forget the beauty, charm, sweet voice and heart-breaking rhythm of the dance. He felt sorry that on account of her fast living, Kairan "though not more than twenty years old, was already faded."

She enacted peacock dance at Firozpur before Lord Auckland and his sister Emily Eden on 30 November, 1838, and left them in utter amazement and astonishment.

Kaulan or Lotus

Kaulan or Lotus came from Kashmir as a part of the annual tribute in the beginning of 1836. She became famous for her beauty and charm. Wade and Ventura went to see her. She engaged herself with exultation

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over the beauty of her face. Ventura had 50 concubines, but he fell in love with Kaulan and showed willingness to marry her. Kaulan agreed and Ranjit Singh gave his consent. But Ventura declined to take Kaulan as a wife. The Maharaja said: "I called Musammat Kaulan, the maid servant, and advised her to file a suit against Ventura Sahib." The Maharaja censured Ventura for having gone back on his word. He observed: "It was a shameful act which was not worthy of him."

Then Ranjit Singh fell in love with her. He put her on a pillion behind himself on horseback through the camp and the city for two or three days.[1] One evening while she was dancing, Ranjit Singh remarked that she was strongly attached to him. Ventura expressed doubt. The Maharaja asked him to try. Ventura refused to accept the challenge of his master. Ranjit Singh assured him that no offence would be taken if nothing was physically done. Ventura agreed. Lotus was sent to the seraglio in the palace with full guard to ensure her safety. In 48 hours with the connivance of the guards she came to Ventua's house. The Maharaja was informed to see her there. A trusted servant was despatched and authenticity was confirmed. Ranjit Singh enrolled her in his corps of Amazons. She fell ill and was much altered in appearance, "but is still a very pretty girl," observed Osborne.

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Maqish

Vigne recorded:

> "What Chinese painter has come and painted your eyebrows? The bloom in your cheeks is that of Budukhshan or Machim (China). Your eyes are like narcissuses, and when I look at them, I feel as if I am under the influence of wine."
>
> *Teri ankhen yeh kahti phirti hain,*
> *Log nahaq sharab pite hain.*

Moran

It was in March, 1802, a few days before Holi that Ranjit Singh came to know about Moran, a 12 or 13 year old girl, a perfect model of beauty and well-versed in the arts of singing and dancing. The Maharaja sent a word to her guardians living in the red light area that he would visit them in the evening. The house was fully cleaned and nicely arranged. Moran, a thin, tall girl, dressed in tight *churidar pajama*, a long white shirt coming

[1]Osborne, p. 190.

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down to below the knees, a befitting waistcoat and a fine Kashmiri shawl, all the cloths wonderfully matched, received Ranjit Singh with a graceful bow, *taslimat*, with a right hand hollow palm, all fingers tightly closed, touching her forehead in the middle. Then she offered him a betel leaf containing some grains of saffron, and cast her magic glance at her guest which penetrated into the very depth of the soul of this 21-year-old most passionate youth. Attended by six musicians, all well-dressed in their long cloaks with a waistband closely fastened, and turbans. Moran began singing and dancing. It looked as if liquid music was oozing out of her throat like the drizzle of a fountain. The softness of her steps in dancing, the grace, the rhythm her slow and steady movements of hands, arms, head, body and feet transported Ranjit Singh into the paradise on the seventh heaven. He ordered his attendants to bring his meals and inform the keeper of the fort that he would be out that night. Four armed men stood on guard at the gate. It became his usual routine to attend his court in the day and live with Moran afterwards in her rooms.

After sometime Ranjit Singh married Moran first according to Muslim rites and then to the Sikh rites and shifted her in a separate *haveli* (mansion) in the city. Moran was never asked for conversion to Sikh religion. She was raised to the status of a queen, and gold and silver coins were struck in her name. She was never brought to the fort to live in the palace. He spent about ten years with her. At the age of 18 or 19 all dancing airls were discarded, because they had faded by the time, and there was a continuous stream of fresh arrivals of the age of 10 or 11. They were granted pensions or jagirs. Moran was given Pathankot in jagir and there she resided in the fort. In 1835 Hugel saw her living there.

On 30 October, 1831, Ranjit Singh, recollecting his infatuation for Moran, exclaimed in a public durbar:

"O Moran, my sweet sweety! I cannot exspress how intensely I loved you. I could not bear separation from you even for a moment.[1]

Nabbo

Emily Eden describes one function of the dancing girls. A little fat dancing girl sang a sort of passionate song to Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, with little meaningful smiles. It attracted his Lordship's notice. Its translation made by Mr. B. was:

> I am the body, you are the soul. We may be parted here, but let no one say we shall be separated hereafter. My father has deserted me. My

[1] *Umdat*, Eng. trans.. 99.

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mother is dead. I have no friends. My grave is open, and I look into it. But do you care for me?

The dancing was very slow and very dull, but the dresses and ornaments were beautiful.

Pahro

Pahro was also a celebrity at the Lahore Durbar. Along with Kairan and Kaulan. Pahro was selected to give a performance of music and dance to entertain Lord Auckland at Firozpur on 27 November, 1838. All were highly impressed with their achievement.

Sabhu

Osborne saw a dance of Maharaja's dancing girls headed by Sabhu with sticks in their hands. They struck them against each other meeting in a mimic combat. They kept time to a slow and graceful movement of their feet. Osborne considered it pretty and singular.

On witnessing another performance he observed that four Kashmiri dancing girls could be considered very beautiful anywhere. They were very fair with expressive countenances, large and lovely eyes. They were richly and gracefully dressed in scarlet and gold embroidered shawl dress with large and enormously loose petticoats of handsomely worked silk. Their head ornaments were singular and very becoming. Their glossy black hair hung down on the back in a number of long plaits with gold coins and small bunches of pearls suspended at their ends. In their ears they wore enormous strings of pearls, and gold rings with several pearls and emeralds attached to them passed through their noses. Their beauty was much disfigured by covering their lower eyelids with gold leaf which gave them a ghastly appearance according to Osborne.

Sabran

Ranjit Singh enquired of Osborne: Did you see my Cachemiran girls? How did you like them? Are they handsomer than the women of Hindustan? Are they as handsome as English women? Which of them did you admire most?

Osborne replied that he admired them all very much and named the two handsomest.

The Maharaja said: Yes, they are pretty, but I have got some more who are handsomer, and I will send them this evening, and you had better keep the one you like best.

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Osborne expressed his gratitude for such an unbounded liberality. The Maharaja's answer was: I have got plenty more.

The Amazons

Ranjit Singh sometimes converted his dancing girls into a platoon of masculine female warriors. They were magnificently dressed in military uniform and armed with bows, arrows, swords and shields. They frequently appeared on horseback and elephants as mounted cavaliers for the amusement of the Maharaja and followed him wherever he went. The head girls were designated as subedar, Jamadar, and chobdar. Smilingly he observed to Osborne; ... but there is one regiment I cannot manage, they give me more trouble than all the rest of my army put together, and those are the Amazones." In leisure hours the Maharaja in the presence of his courtiers enjoyed their flirtations, songs and dances with wine flowing freely.[1]

Confession

On 9 November, 1831, in the open durbar the Maharaja declared that "in his life he had been making so much of merriment and pleasure that it could not be described in words."[2]

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Artists and Painters

Maharaja Ranjit Singh patronised artists and painters. Atar Khan, the famous flute player, was frequenly invited to entertain him. Hashim was the court poet in Panjabi. In 1836 the Maharaja attended a function at Lahore by M. Antonie who was in the service of Begam Samru. After this the Maharaja cherished a desire to develop the science of music and dance. He asked Kishan Chand, his vakil at Ludhiana, to seek Captain Wade's advice in this matter. On 6 March, 1836, he wrote: "I am only in want of good musicians. If I can get a few of them, they will also be able to teach their art to my people."

On the occasion of his meeting with Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, Ranjit Singh had taken his painters with him to Rupar. They gave to the Hindustani painter of the Governor-General two pictures drawn by them, one of Nila horse and the other of Raja Suchait Singh, the handsomest man at the Maharaja's court and asked him to present them to the Governor-General on behalf of the Maharaja.

[1]NAI, Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 12 October, 1827, no. 3; *Udmat*, Daftar III. pt. I. 14; pt. IV. p. 576; PGRO. Monograph. XVIII. p. 54-55.

[2]*Umdat*, Daftar III. pt. I. p. 106; Suri's Eng. trans., p. 105.

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The Maharaja asked the Hindustani painter in the Governor-General's camp, to accompany him to Lahore, and he agreed. The painter drew an outline of the Maharaja who granted him Rs. 100.

The well-known painters at Lahore were Charat Singh and Mota Singh. The former drew pictures of the forts of Calcutta and Allahabad, and also of Englishmen which were very much liked by the Maharaja. Mian Imam Bakhsh was another celebrated painter who drew exquisite pictures.

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CHAPTER 34

Personality and Place in History

Physique

To all beholders Ranjit Singh appeared short, below the middle stature. Alexander Burnes estimated his height at 5´-3´´; while Prinsep thought it could be at the utmost 5´-7´´ when erect. But he was in the habit of stooping while standing or walking. Being fond of riding on horseback from childhood, he had developed the habit of bending forward. He had a well-built body neither fat nor lean. His complexion was light olive or dusky or brown grey. His hair on head appeared to be long and thick under a turban. He washed it with curd. His head was square and large for his stature. His forehead was remarkably broad. His face was oval in shape full of expression and vitality, and was marked with deep spots of smallpox. His left eye was almost closed, but the right eye was large and prominent, brown and blazing with light and fire, quick and searching. His first glance pierced into the heart of visitors and revealed to him their real character. It overawed even a hardy ruffian. This factor enabled him to pick up right type of men for various jobs in his government in the absence of any written test or passing an examination. His power of observation was so keen that nothing escaped his notice.

His short, straight nose was thick at the tip. His nostrils expanded and contracted when his talk became lively. His lips were thick, but well-formed, tight over his teeth. His teeth were orderly and good, all of which were fast and firm to the last. His smile was pleasing. His voice was generally rough, but fascinating when he wished to flatter. While talking he sat in an easy English arm chair, with his feet drawn under him. Then he kept his right hand on his knee and with the left hand stroked his beard. He was unreserved in his conversation. His grey moustaches were thick and long and white long beard thin on cheeks, projected below his

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breast upto navel. Both mingled to give him an imposing appearance. The two were so bushy as to conceal his face. He used *vatna* and oil to give them a glossy look. He nor any Sikh Sardar dyed his beard during his reign.

His neck was thick and muscular and his shoulders and chest were broad. His arms were thin and long enabling him to wield a sword with dexterity. His hands were short and soft. His fingers were of medium size in length and thickness and nails were red and round. His grip of the hand was stiff and strong. Sometimes he held a visitor's hand firmly in his own for half an hour and pressed stranger's fingers. His belly did not bulge and was kept within bounds by daily gallop on the fastest, tallest and naughtiest of his horses. He enjoyed a good appetite. His stomach worked well and he seldom suffered from constipation. His virility was strong, and it was further strengthened by medicines. Ranjit Singh invited Hakim Baghdadi for consultation. He prepared an electuary from Sakun Kur Fish. The Maharaja found it so effective that he conferred upon the *hakim* a jagir worth Rs. 20,000 per annum. Besides he took opium. On 15 July, 1837, the Maharaja said that he had been taking 8 *chawals* (rice grain) before and was then taking 3 *chawals* of opium regularly. His legs were short and stout and toes small. His feet were short and broad at the toes.

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To European visitors, some of whom were tall, robust and handsome, Ranjit Singh's external appearance did not impress. Three years before his death in 1836 when he had been emaciated by disease and despair on account of British Government's ambition and imbecility of his eldest son; he was visited by the German traveller Baron Charles Hugel, who wrote: "...he is the ugliest man I saw throughout the Punjab, and most forbidding human being I have ever seen...". Immediately after the first impression, the visitor was overawed by the sharp and piercing glance of his fiery right eye. He realized that he was face to face with a giant in internal power. His searching questions which followed with the lightning rapidity for full one hour dazzled Hugel's wits and overwhelmed him. He found him full of vigour and alive to the fingertips. He possessed a wonderful dynamo within, which generated boundless energy and magnetism and gave him an air of confidence, courage and determination.

Dress

Ranjit Singh wore simple clothes, of Dhaka muslin in summer, and of yellow or green pashmina in winter. His turban was rather long inclined over his forehead with the front end concealed and the back end hanging

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down. Sometimes he put on a handkerchief over the turban. A shirt of white muslin, a belt or *kamarband* tied over the shirt round his waist, a *kachchha,* a pair of tight trousers, yellow or pea-green, of *Daryai* silk, a pair of slippers, completed his dress. In winter he wore woollen pajama, single or double and single or double stockings. Over his costume sometimes or on formal occasions, he wore a mantle called *angarkha.*

In daily life the Maharaja wore no ornaments. But on state occasions he adorned his person with various jewels. He put on an elegant sarpech in front of the truban from the centre of which was suspended a very large diamond. He wore necklaces of gold, pearls, diamonds and emeralds, some of which were very large, and armlets, bracelets and anklets. Sometimes Koh-e-Nur was also worn on his left arm. In his girdle or *patka* or *kamarband,* he kept a poniard with hilt and scabbard richly embossed with jewellery. His sword was studded with precious stones. He was very fond of pistols. He proudly wore two pistols sent as a present by Lord Amherst, the British Governor-General. In 1836, the Maharaja said to Hugel: "When you get home, send me a pair of pistols from your country". Ranjit Singh was fond of seeing his ministers, courtiers, and all other state employees wearing fine dresses and jewellery. Their clothes of different colours and fashions delighted him. No ill-dressed man was allowed to approach him.

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Food and Drink

Ranjit Singh's breakfast consisted of rice, curry, sweetmeats, curd, fat quails stuffed with spices, milk and mango jam. According to Jacquemont his lunch was made up of bread, pulao, milk and fruit. The Maharaja loved mangoes of Darband and Multan; from the latter place they were received daily in *bahngis.* He used the world famous rice of Bara near Peshawar. The grain of this rice was so long as to make a span (9 inches) by fourteen grains. While on hearth its sweet and pleasant fragrance filled the whole house. It was of brown colour. Its price in those days was 4 kg for a rupee; while the Basmati rice of Mukerian was sold at the rate of 40 kg per rupee. The Maharaja received the Bara rice in tribute from his Governor of Peshawar.

At tea time in the afternoon he did not take tea. In summer he ate *sattu,* flour of parched barley with iced *sharbat* of sugar. Sometimes, he ate left-over things from his midday meal. He used fresh *bhutta* of maize in season and green parched gram as well as dry parched gram. His dinner contained different kinds of meats, richly cooked. The China and glass wares were also used. In sharp contrast to the surrounding magnificence,

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the eatables were handed up in leaves of *dhak* tree sewn into the shape of cups. They contained hare, partridge, pork and all sorts of games, which he ate freely. He used several kinds of jams and pickles. There was also a large variety of sweets and fruits. Milk was used with his meals every day.

Alexander Burnes wrote in 1832, that

> "four trays of sweetmeats followed, with fruit, and the repast concluded with *sherbat,* mixed with snow, the sight of which delighted us as much as our new friends".

Ranjit Singh drank wine frequently and in a large quantity. According to Hugel he mixed brandy with strongest sauces made from flesh of every kind of animal, beef excepted, pearls and jewels, musk, opium, plants of various kinds, all mingled together into a beverage. Hugel called it "Devil's Drink", "a most noxious potation".

Daily Routine

Ranjit Singh spent two months of summer, May and June, at Dinanagar in Gurdaspur district. Osborne who stayed with the Maharaja for nearly a month has given an illuminating picture of Ranjit Singh's daily routine. He says that the Maharaja resided in a large garden of mango trees. A canal ran through it. There were several small houses, a simple palace and women's quarters scattered about all over. The flower plants and shrubs were fresh and green. At a little distance from the garden there was the parade ground.

Between the main entrance of the garden and the parade ground a small scarlet and gold embroidered shawl tent was permanently pitched. It was open in front. To this place the Maharaja retired after dusk. There he slept in the open, under the stars. He was guarded by a few Sikh soldiers. His sword and shield were always kept by his pillow, and a saddled horse stood ready in front of his tent. He went to bed at about 9.00 P.M. He would get up at about 4.30 A.M. He was away for a brisk gallop at five o'clock. A little before 6 A.M. he inspected the parade or artillery practice of his troops, either on horseback or on an elephant.

4 June, 1838, Dinanagar

Ranjit Singh left for an airing at 6 A.M., and sent a word to M'Gregor and Osborne to join him in his morning excursion. The Maharaja was in a litter carried by four men. They overtook him at a distance of 13 or 14 km. He was accompanied by a guard of 150 Ghorcharhas and a 12-

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pounder horse artillery. Hira Singh was with him in the litter. Raja Suchait Singh and Raja Ajit Singh of Ladwa on horseback were behind his litter. M'Gregor and Osborne on horseback accompanied him chatting and gossiping. Ranjit Singh enquired if they had taken their breakfast. On receiving a reply in the negative, the Maharaja ordered to have the meal on the spot.

As regards his programme at Lahore some details are supplied by Wade. In winter Ranjit Singh got up at about 6 A.M., prostrated before the Holy *Granth*, went out for a brisk ride. He inspected troops at 8 A.M., and had breakfast. At 9.00 A.M., he held a court, received reports, issued orders, and very carefully examined financial accounts. He took his lunch at 12 noon and then rested for an hour. His secretary remained in attendance to take down whatever occurred to the Maharaja. On getting up he listened to the recitation from the *Granth*. The court was held at about 2.30 P.M., which continued till 5 or 5.30 P.M. The dancing girls entertained him. He took his dinner at about 7.30, spent some time in meditation, visited his palace for a while and went to bed at 9.00 P.M.

During his tours he was accompanied by his chiefs, a contingent of troops, dancing girls, and both the *Adi Granth* and the *Dasam Granth*.

Murray says that Ranjit Singh was extremely fond of witnessing military exercises of his troops, and spent nearly half the day inspecting parades, drill and shooting, and in examining arms, ammunition and equipment.

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Horse Riding

Ranjit Singh could not do without a daily gallop on a tall and troublesome steed. Even when his right side had been struck by paralysis, he called one of his best horses. He could not jump on the back of a ten feet high steed. A tall man knelt down by the left side of the horse. Maharaja threw his leg over his neck, and was on his back. The man rose with Ranjit Singh on his shoulders. He caught hold of the horse's mane. Another man put his right foot into the stirrup and then the left foot in the other stirrup. Now he wore a majestic appearance, and was off with the lightning speed. In 1802 he rode with Moran behind him and in 1836 with Kaulan in the same posture. Peshwa Baji Rao I, 1720-40, rode with his Muslim mistress Mastani, on separate horses, stirrup by stirrup, into the battlefield, and on an excursion from Pune to Delhi. The censure of his own family members led both of them to commit suicide, the Peshwa being only 40, and the greatest Maratha empire builder. Against Ranjit Singh nobody in the whole kingdom dared to raise a finger, on account of

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the case of Mir Mohkam-ud-din. He went out for an airing in the mornings and evenings on a horse or in a sadan with glass doors .

In 1830 Bellasis saw Ranjit Singh returning from his morning ride. He rode gracefully, on a handsome, active horse, followed by his principal sardars, each with his silken *chhoata* carried as a symbol of rank, by a running footman, and the whole cortege, followed by an escort of 500 well mounted horsemen and as many foot. They consisted of all tribes and castes, Sikhs, Pathans, Hindus, Gorkhas, etc. all gaily attired in scarlet and yellow silk; sitting in high-peaked saddles, and armed to the teeth with matchlock, pistol, blunderbuss, sword and spear. The others were lightly but efficiently armed. A few Akalis too were present, conspicuous by their dress.

Sportsman

Ranjit Singh was a great sportsman and perfect swordsman. In 1831, at Rupar, he successfully competed with his soldiers and those of Skinner's Horse in tent-pegging and in various acts of swordsmanship.

Hunting

Ranjit Singh was extremely fond of hunting. He organized hunting expeditions frequently and awarded prizes to those who had exhibited gallantry in killing wild animals. Certain parts of forests were reserved as hunting preserves called by different names as *Bela, Bir, Rakh* or *Ramna.* No cultivation or grazing of cattle, or cutting of wood and grass was allowed in them. The most noteworthy hunting grounds were near Shah Balawal at Lahore, Kahnuwan in Gurdaspur district, Mahadevi and Ahu or Haran Manara near Shaikhupura. The bushy jungles, along the Ravi and the Indus abounded in wild boars, leopards, deer and other wild animals.

In 1823 Ranjit Singh was encamped at Khushab where he enjoyed wild hog hunting. In 1831 he hunted one tiger and two tigresses. The same year the Maharaja went out hunting with Kahan Singh Majithia who first shot a tiger and then killed him with his sword. He received a village in reward.

Alexander Burnes described the hunting of a tiger by the Maharaja in 1831 as follows:

> The party was entirely composed of horsemen. The monster was speedily wounded by some one, and several riders were unhorsed from the fright of their steeds. The Seiks then advanced on foot, sword in

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hand, to attack the tiger; he sprang at one man most furiously, and, as he fired on his left shoulder, the poor fellow bravely struck his head by a well directed blow; the contest was unequal, and the man fell, horribly lacerated. His comrades instantly ran up, and with cuts and wounds, the tiger soon fell. He was a huge animal, and measured ten feet; his thigh was as large as that of a full grown man. The coolness and courage of the Seiks surpass belief; they have great encouragement from their cheifs.

Hunting Camp, January, 1832

On another occasion Alexander Burnes was invited to join a hunting party. An extremely beautiful hunting camp was established in the jungles of Shaikhupura district. A large pavilion of red cloth surrounded by numerous *qunats* was Ranjit Singh's encampment. His chiefs and troops were encamped in picturesque groups around it.

The suite of tents pitched for Alexander Burnes was most elegant. They were made of scarlet and yellow cloth. The floor was covered with Kashmir carpets and French satin. "It was with some reluctance that I set foot upon such valuable materials. In each tent was a camp bed, with curtains of yellow silk". The guests were provided new tents each day. Burnes describes the following day's tents: They were made of Kashmir shawls, 14 feet square. Two of these tents were joined with superb material. The intervening space was shaded by a lofty screen supported on four massive poles adorned with silver. The shawls of one tent were red, of the other white. In each tent stood a camp bed with curtains of Kashmir shawls. It gave an impression of a fairy abode rather than an encampment in the jungles of the Panjab.

Ranjit Singh's kennel contained a large pack of chosen hounds procured from all parts of his kingdom and from Sind and Afghanistan. In 1831, the Nawab of Bahawalpur sent five hounds along with other presents. The Maharaja had a large number of hawks and falcons which came from hill chiefs in tribute. In 1836, Avitabile sent eleven hounds from Peshawar. The small game was taken with matchlocks, dogs and hawks For big game the whole camp moved up with the Maharaja.

A preserve of the Maharaja was cultivated with grain and sugarcane to feed wild hogs, deer, hares, black partridges, etc. In 1838, Osborne and his companions enjoyed two hours' shooting in those fields. On their return the Maharaja examined every pig. He counted the number of balls each pig had received. The one killed with a single shot was praised, and the one who had got several bullets was declared "bad, very bad". He gave

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every servant ten rupees. On another day 25 hogs were caught in snares and then beheaded with a single stroke of the sword.

Horses and Laily

Ranjit Singh's love of horses was proverbial. He had collected a stable of about a thousand horses for his own personal use. They were procured from India. Afghanistan, Turkistan, Khorasan and Iran. Riding was his daily exercise. Even when he was ill, he was lifted up on the saddle. He then enjoyed a fast gallop for a couple of hours. He was a critical connoisseur of horses.

The Maharaja adorned his horses with gold, pearls and diamonds. Emily Eden in 1838 wrote:

> The first show of the day was Ranjit's private stud. I suppose fifty horses were led past us. The first had on it emerald trappings, necklaces arranged on its neck, and between its ears, and in front of the saddle two enormous emeralds, nearly two inches square, carved all over, and set in gold frames, like little looking glasses. The crupper was all emeralds, and there were stud ropes of gold put on something like a martingale ... this was valued at 37 lacs. The next horse was simply attired in diamonds and turquoises, another in pearls, and there was one with trappings of coral and pearl that was very pretty. Their saddle cloths have stones woven into them. It reduces European magnificence to a very low pitch.

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Ranjit Singh had captured Peshawar in 1819, but had placed it in the charge of its Barakzai Governor Yar Muhammad Khan, as his own tributary. Shortly afterwards, Ranjit Singh learnt that Yar Muhammad Khan had a very fine horse called Qahar. The Maharaja obtained it in tribute due from him.

In 1822, the Maharaja came to know that Yar Muhammad Khan had another horse named Laily whose fame for beauty and grace had spread all over the West Asian countries as well as in Europe. Ranjit Singh became restless to acquire it. In 1823, he sent Faqir Aziz-ud-din to Peshawar to secure it. The Governor expressed surprise for having such a horse and Faqir's pleading availed him nothing. Ranjit Singh sent a strong force under his able general, Budh Singh Sandhanwalia, to bring Laily at any cost. The Governor said Laily had died. Budh Singh failed to trace the horce anywhere. Shortly afterwards Budh Singh was killed while suppressing a revolt of the Pathans.

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Prince Kharak Singh was sent from Lahore to secure Laily. On the approach of the Prince Yar Muhammad fled away into the hills. Kharak Singh held Peshawar for several months without getting any clue about the horse. Ventura was in command of Attock fort. The Maharaja ordered him to proceed against Yar Muhammad Khan. Just then Yar Muhammad Khan was killed in a battle with Sayyid Ahmad Wahabi. The Maharaja appointed the deceased's brother Sultan Muhammad Khan to succeed him on the express condition of surrendering Laily.

The Governor gave the horse to Ventura. The Maharaja celebrated the occasion with great rejoicings. This horse was of dark grey colour with some black spots. It was thirteen years old. In 1831, at Rupar the Maharaja showed it to Lord William Bentinck. Baron Charles Hugel saw these horse in 1836. He says it was sixteen hands tall. A normal hand is nine inches in length. It means the height of the horse was about twelve feet. The Maharaja used to tell his European visitors in pride that Laily had cost him sixty lakhs of rupees and 12,000 soldiers.

Griffin is of the view that this horse was not the real Laily. Laily implies a mare and not a stallion. Laily also signifies black colour. But Ventura and Ranjit Singh were sure that it was real Laily and we must accept their view. Sohan Lal Suri says that it was Yar Muhammad Khan who surrendered the horse in October, 1827, while others hold that Sultan Muhammad Khan gave up Laily. Lieutenant Barr saw this horse in 1839. It had grown old and Ranjit Singh had ceased to take interest in it. Barr found it "a speckled grey, overloaded with fat, filthily dirty and its heels, for want of paring and exercise were so high, that it limped along with much difficulty". A Dakhini, acquired by Ranjit Singh for Rs. 15,000 appeared to Barr more beautiful than Laily.

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Mind

His mind was sharp. It was extremely resourceful. It never failed him to suggest what measures should be taken to meet an exigency under adverse circumstances. He was so intelligent as easily to understand reports from his governors and generals or from foreign powers. He transacted business rapidly, and immediately gave short and steady orders on listening to a report read to him. When the draft of his instructions was explained to him, he easily detected whether it fully met his view. He spoke in Panjabi with his men, but conversed with Europeans in Hindustani and used the service of an interpreter. He possessed an insatiable hunger for world news. He would ask questions on all possible topics from heaven to hell and from Europe to China, and from sex to saintliness.

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Jacquemont wrote: "He has asked me a hundred thousand questions about India, the British, Europe, Bonaparte, God, the devil, and a myriad others of the same kind". Hugel wrote: "After I had been subjected to this examination for a whole hour, without one moment's intermission to put a single question in return, he turned to Mr. Vigne". His questions were short and clear. They were put continuously. When struck by paralysis his questions could not be easily understood. If the answer was delayed, Jamadar Khushhal Singh repeated the question.

Newspapers in Persian and Urdu were read out to him. He asked for the views of listeners and made his own comments. Steinbach who served under him wrote that the Maharaja possessed "The spirit and originality of a man of genius".

His conversation was lively, full of imagination and frankness. His own remarks and comments were given in so short and pithy sentences that they were fixed in the mind of others. He paid minute attention to everything from the most insignificant matter to the one of highest importance. He could atonce read the motives of the actions of others. Having once adopted an attitude, he stuck fast to it, and followed it with great power and passion. He could not read or write. He could not sign his name, and affixed his private seal. On very formal documents he put his right hand palm dipped in saffron colour.

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Memory

His memory was excellent. He remembered even the minutest details on all aspects of administration, names of persons, and amounts paid and to be realised, distances from the capital to various places. He remembered the names of all important places in his dominion and of officers appointed there, their ranks, grades, salary and tribute fixed upon them. He knew the name of every elephant, horse, hunting dog and gun. He checked all the revenue accounts and no deception could go unnoticed by him. The honest officers were highly rewarded and corrupt ones were heavily fined and imprisoned.

Character

Ranjit Singh was generous, kind hearted, merciful and charitable. On occasions he was selfish regardless of any ties of blood or friendship in his pursuit of power and pleasure. He reduced friends and foes, widows and orphans, relations and companions alike without any priest of conscience or feelings of guilt or guile, yet he fleeced his rivals and enemies like a man and not like a demon. His vices were great but they were due to the

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spirit of the times and condition of the country, while his virtues were his own.

Courtesy

Ranjit Singh was courteous to his subordinate chiefs. On 1st November, 1810, Nadhan Singh Ayu came in. The Maharaja stood up and embraced him. On 14 March, 1813, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia arrived. The Maharaja stood up. On 18 December, 1813, Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra came. Ranjit Singh stood up full length out of respect and seated him in a chair. On 21 January, 1814, Ranjit Singh was coming from Twaifpul to Lahore on an elephant. He seated Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh by his side in the special howdah. Diwan Kirpa Ram, governor of Kashmir, had been dismissed and imprisoned and fined nine lakhs of rupees for disobeying his Prime Minister Raja Dhian Singh. The courtiers recommended him for his honesty and efficiency. The Maharaja summoned him on 28 February, 1831. Kirpa Ram offered as *nazar* one horse, Rs. 105 and some gold ducats, and begged pardon. Ranjit Singh stood up from his chair, embraced him and granted him one silvery white horse, 8 garments, a turban gem, a plume, an underturban, a necklace of pearls and a few pairs of pashmina chadars while gold bangles were granted to his attendants. But the Diwan never forgot his humiliation, went to Banaras and never returned to the Panjab. He was the grandson of Diwan Mokham Chand.

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Emily Eden saw two children, one boy and other girl, four or five years old. They were the children of his two army commanders who had lost their lives in a battle. The Maharaja took these children with him wherever he went, to his durbar or the army parade, or on festive occasions, and at home. He gave a state dinner to Lord Auckland. The two children came with the Maharaja. When they were dining, the children began running here and there in the dining hall and under the dining table. The little boy took the Governor-General's leg round his arms. Both the children had been married by Ranjit Singh.

He was generally sweet tempered and there was a great element of liberality in him, and he lavishly gave gifts to his favourites and foreign visitors. But occasionally he was bearish. In youth his temper was excellent, always in control; but due to impaired health he became irritable. Sometimes, he burst out into fits of passion, and used violence towards the objects of his rage. But there was no ferocity in his disposition, and he never committed murder even under aggravated offence. Everybody loved and feared him at the same time.

In May, 1836, Maharaja Ranjit Singh suffered from stammering due to

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the after-effect of paralysis. Dr. Harlan was invited to treat him. The doctor demanded one lakh of rupees as his fee and arrears of his salary. The Maharaja was infuriated. He sent Gullu farrash (butler) with a company of troops to seize the doctor and bring him to the Shalamar Gandens. The doctor was abused and insulted. He fled to Ludhiana. The Maharaja felt ashamed of his behaviour, and sent two chiefs to bring back the doctor with honour. There was no vanity in him.[1]

Superstitions

Maharaja Ranjit Singh believed in omens, lucky and unlucky hours, charms, spells, witchcraft and predictions. He always consulted astrologers before entering upon an important undertaking. Generally he took two slips of papers. On one slip was written the object of his wish and on the other the reverse. He placed both the slips in the Holy *Granth*. A little boy or a *Granthi* took one of the slips without looking at it. If it predicted in his favour, he took action with full confidence of success. If it told the reverse, the idea of doing it was given up altogether or postponed.

In 1805 Jaswant Rao Holkar arrived at Amritsar, and requested the Maharaja for help. The Maharaja consulted the Holy *Granth* whether he should espouse the cause of Holkar or he should cooperate with the British. He put two slips in the sacred *Granth*. The slip suggesting friendship with the Company came out. Treating it as a voice from heaven, the Maharaja supported the British.

In case of illness Ranjit Singh gave alms in cash and kind to Brahmans and the poor in order to gain recovery. Sometimes, he invited soothsayers to heal him. In 1826, the Maharaja fell ill. A Nanakputra blew some spell on his face. The Maharaja gave him Rs. 4,000 as *nazar*. He wore on his right arm a jewel on which a mantra had been engraved.

In 1833, Maharaja was taken ill. Some people brought amulets to be worn by him. On certain occasions an amulet was washed in water which was drunk by Ranjit Singh. In 1834 the Maharaja suffered from motions for 4 or 5 days. Ram Singh Brahman gave him two amulets to be washed in water which was drunk in the morning and evening.[2]

He asked Madhusudan, Bahlu Ram and Dalpat Rae astrologers when the malady would leave him. They studied his horoscope and told the Maharaja that the inauspicious star, saturn, was bent upon harming him. To avoid the evil effects of this star, they suggested a certain course. The

[1]*Mah-e-Alam Afroz*, 31 May, 1836, pp. 12-13.

[2]*Jame-e-Jahan Numa*, 12 March, 1834, p. 11.

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Maharaja should supply an image of gold set with sapphire, one pair of *doshala* of black colour and one horse of the same colour to an Acharj Brahman, who would be expelled out of his dominion.

These things were at once procured. After a great search an Acharj Brahman, resident of Mathura, was also found. The Brahman was first given a bath with oil. Then the blackness of the frying pan was smeared all over his body, head and face. He was dressed in black clothes. The Maharaja gave him two gold ear-rings, Rs. 500 in cash, one black horse with black trappings and bade him good bye. The Brahman was seated on the black horse. Two regiments of soldiers escorted him across river Satluj. Thousands of people, young and old, saw the saturn departing from the Sikh kingdom. The housewives closed the doors of their houses lest the saturn should enter into them. On reaching the Satluj the guards in British Government service, posted on the eastern side of the river, objected to his entry without a permit. On verification that he belonged to Mathura, he was allowed to proceed farther.

After the departure of saturn from Lahore, the Maharaja ordered Faqir Nur-ud-din to distribute Rs. 5,000 among the poor and the destitute and to fix stipends for the maintenance of widows, the blind and the lame.

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The appearance of the new moon was announced by firing a salute from a cannon in big cities like Lahore and Amritsar. Osborne wrote: "Though he is by profession a Sikh in religion he is in reality a sceptic, and it is difficult to say whether his superstition is real or only a mask assumed to gratify and conciliate his people".

Amusements

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was fond of ram fight. He had many fat-tailed rams for this purpose. In 1828 the Maharaja was offered two rams by the Raja of Rohtasgarh. The Maharaja selected one of them to fight with one in his stock. In the fight the Maharaja's ram won the duel. Ranjit Singh was fond of boating as a means of recreation, and had several covered boats on the Ravi for this purpose. Lahore and Amritsar were surrounded by numerous gardens. Hunting was another pastime. He daily enjoyed songs and dances of his dancing girls.

Dinanagar

In 1831, Captain Wade went to see the Maharaja at Dinanagar. He found him seated in a shady spot by the side of the canal, attended by a few sardars and a troop of about thirty dancing girls. He kept a large

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establishment of them, and spent lavishly on them. His 150 dancing girls between age of twelve and twenty, of the rarest beauty, elegance and charm, dazelled the eye of the beholders, while a single glance of one dancer transported Vigne, a clergyman, into intoxication.

Aversion to English Medicine

In 1826, Ranjit Singh fell ill. Dr. Murray came from Ludhiana to treat him. He was warmly received at Lahore and his allowance was fixed at Rs. 100 per day. The Maharaja did not take his medicines because he thought they were effective in cold climate and not in hot climate.

In June, 1831, the Maharaja agreed to take Honigberger's medicine provided it was made in the presence of Faqir Aziz-ud-din. He prepared Homoeopathic medicine and put one drop of it on a lump of sugar. The Maharaja put it into his mouth till it was dissolved. It was given every morning and evening. On the first day there was no improvement. On the second day the Maharaja felt somewhat better. On the third day he was considerably improved. The Maharaja presented a pair of gold bracelets valued at Rs. 500 and two Kashmiri shawls to Honigberger as a reward.

Hospitals

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Maharaja Ranjit Singh had his own dispensary called Gulab Khana. It was a two storeyed building adjoining the southern gateway of the Badshahi Masjid. In this Gulab Khana all sorts of medicines like electuaries, tonics, essences, rose water, bedmushk, etc. were prepared for the royal family under the superintendence of Faqir Aziz-ud-din and Nur-ud-din. Honigberger also had his clinic in this building. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh there was no State hospital for the treatment of the public.

Diplomacy

The two main instruments of his diplomacy were cunning and conciliation, which he employed with great dexterity and uniform success. As regards his dealings with the British Government, Prinsep says that "he was the only eastern prince whom the British Government never could accuse of a breach of his engagements".

In fact in his relations with the British Government Ranjit Singh was at his worst. He did not realize that in politics and in war fortune is not on the side of the defensive. It does not mean war, but assertion as an independent king and not as a vassal like the rajas of Patiala, Nabha and Jind.

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The Sikh Jats

At the close of his reign only three Jat Sikh families were represented at his court. Lahna Singh Majithia was mainly an engineer, and was not interested in politics. Sham Singh Atariwala was kept suppressed. In 1831, for not honouring a general letter not addressed to the Sardar by name, he was fined Rs. 50,000. His wealth was drained at the time of his daughter's marriage in 1837. Sandhanwalias were his collaterals, and were not allowed to come to the forefront.

The Sikhs were not given full opportunity to be partners with him as builders and masters of the Sikh kingdom. They were valued only as soldiers in the army, not even as commanders and generals.

By his own example of excessive indulgence in drinking, opium eating, enjoying concubines and dancing girls, he spoiled the morals of his own progeny. Kharak Singh by birth was deficient in natural intelligence, perhaps due to premature delivery on account of Moran affair. Whatever wisdom and intellect he possessed it was washed away in wine, opium and women as Ranjit Singh used to offer him and his teen-aged son Nau Nihan Singh beautiful girls as wives. Sher Singh was completely sunk in orgies. The other princes were of no count in Ranjit Singh's eyes and they had no place in the Lahore Durbar. Thus there was no capable Sikh chief to save the Sikh kingdom from the jaws of the giant after him.

The Muslims

The Muslim rule began in Panjab in the beginning of eleventh century. They enjoyed this position for nearly eight hundred years. The establishment of Sikh monarchy was a severe blow to their prestigeous position, politically, militarily, economically and socially. Ranjit Singh's liberal policy had reconciled the Muslim population in the Panjab. Muslim officers were employed in most sensitive departments such as foreign department and artillery in the army. Sayyids were given consideration in assessment. The *Quran* was highly respected, mosques and mausoleums received liberal grants of jagirs and cash. The ulema were given munificent awards. The Shariah courts were not interfered with. Evenhanded justice was administered to Muslims. Full freedom in religious matters except cow-killing and loud call for prayers was assured.

Faqir Wahid-ud-din in his *The Real Ranjit Singh* writes:

"The Maharaja on a few occasions was even present at Id-ul-Fitr although that is a strictly religious festival, and during Munarram young princes used to make offerings *(nayaz)* just as if they had been Muslims". Ranjit Singh paid Rs. 10,000 for a calligraphic copy of the *Quran*.

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Peace and Order

Ranjit Singh established order where there was disorder. He created law in place of lawlessness and anarchy. He gave unity where there was disunity and discord. Universal calm prevailed in the country. There was no restriction on people to keep arms. There was no police to punish them. Yet there was no revolt against him except in the North-West Frontier Province and no Panjabi Musalman supported the rebels. The village Panchayats worked efficiently and took suitable action against the offenders. Ranjit Singh frequently travelled in his kingdom to keep a watch on the working of his officers and to see things with his own eyes, rather than depend upon their reports. He was not destined to visit the valley of Kashmir. He did not like to receive petty complaints, but when one was brought to his notice, imprisonment of the officer was instantaneous, and then investigation followed. If the person was found guilty, heavy fine and confiscation of his property were certain. Disobedience of his orders even to the slightest degree received the severest punishment.

Alexander Burnes stated: "I never quitted the presence of a native of Asia with such impressions as I left this man; without education, and without a guide, he conducts all the affairs of his kingdom with surpassing energy and vigour, and yet he wields his power with a moderation quite unprecedented in an Eastern prince."

Masson, an American traveller recorded: 'At this day the operation of the laws is so effective, that there are few Eastern countries in which the solitary traveller can pass with more safety than the Panjab'.

Army

The entire machinery of government was controlled by army. The taxes and tributes were collected through army. It kept the government officials under discipline. The powerful subjects were subdued by it. All classes of population sumitted through fear of the army. The personal influence of Ranjit Singh, his daily reviews even during illness and his verbal orders held the discipline and affection of the troops. The complete power and authority lay in Ranjit Singh who controlled the army by his ability and capacity for leadership.

The army was inspired by higher feelings. It looked upon itself, and was regarded by others, as the representative body of the Sikh people. The Sikh army was not a mercenary army. It was the Sikh people's army. The Sikh soldiers had created the Sikh State. They considered themselves as its defenders and preservers.

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Ranjit Singh maintained the supremacy of civil authorities over the army, by not allowing it to interfere in matters of policy. Their duty was to maintain the security and integrity of the State, its expansion and peace and order in the country.

Popularity

According to Hugel Ranjit Singh's influence over the people amounted to enchantment. Nobody in Panjab objected to his doings with dancing girls, because they were professional. Further they believed that the king had a right to indulge in such frivolities. His generosity made him most lovable and did not affect his dignity, honour and prestige. The Sikh State was popular in Panjab. It was a symbol of a national institution which allowed people of all castes and creeds to live in peace and prosperity from foreign hordes and lawless inhabitants of the land. Hindus and Musalmans were in no humour to quarrel with it because it was a Sikh State. They did not want any revolution. The government also did not want to provoke them beyond a certain limit in the realization of taxes and duties. Thus the rulers and the ruled both remained within bounds.

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Secret of His Popularity

1. Ranjit Singh did not interfere in the well-established customs and practices of the people. On the contrary he respected and protected them.
2. Panchayats in villages were allowed to function unhampered.
3. He patronised all religions alike.
4. He applied no force to convert people to Sikhism.
5. He offered posts on the criterion of merit, talent and character with strict impartiality.
6. Religious shrines of all were given equal consideration.
7. Justice was administered equally between man and man.
8. He participated in the fairs and festivals of all.
9. He gave full support to develop agriculture, trade, commerce and industry.
10. In times of emergency such as floods, epidemics, he gave to people every possible help.
11. Extortion by his officers and troops was not permitted.
12. All disputes were settled according to Shastras, the Sharia and the old customs, usages and practices of the parties.
13. There was perfect security of person and property.

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Estimate

As a man, warrior, general, conqueror, administrator, ruler and diplomat, Ranjit Singh occupies a high position among the greatest sovereigns of the world. He was not a despot who enforced his will regardless of the interests or feelings of others. He was one of the best rulers in Indian history. According to his earliest biographer Sir Lepel Griffin "undoubtedly puts his name among the great leaders of men from Julius Caesar down to Napoleon Bonaparte".

"It was his extraordinary talent alone", says Marshman, "which reared the edifice of Sikh greatness, and if it had not been hemmed in by the irresistible power of the East India Company, he would undoubtedly have established a new and magnificent empire in Hindoostan".

By all his contemporaries he was judged as a phenomenal man with an uncommon degree of intellect, very active, strong, brave, enduring, hardy, liberal and generous. He loved power, money, beauty, wine, women, music, dancing, hunting, tolerance, frankness, superstitions, discipline, Sikh religion and Europeans. He hated opposition, disobedience, complaints, ugliness and cowardliness.

His Government was not a military despotism. It was based on willing cooperation and submission to competent authority. Fraternity and fidelity were so mingled up as to create a spirit of harmony and homogeneity.

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It was not a Punjabi State, for Pathans, Baluchis, Multani Sindhis, Kashmiris, Tibetans, Dogras, Rajputs and others were included in it. There was no Panjabi imperialism, no Panjabi nationalism and no Panjabiyat. Had there been Panjabi nationalism, the Cis-Satluj Sikh Chiefs would have joined Ranjit Singh in forming one single state.

Roughly speaking Ranjit Singh's kingdom was a sort of a republic with a popular life-president.

Could Ranjit Singh's Kingdom Survive?

Having defeated Napoleon Bonaparte in the battle of Waterloo in 1815, the British statesmen found that England had emerged the greatest power in the world on account of Industrial Revolution which had started first of all in their own country. They formed a plan of world domination.

As for Asia they held a strong base in India. Their capital was at Calcutta. From there they seized Lower Burma in 1826, and continued extension into China. To control Ranji Singh's kingdom, Sind and Afghanistan, a second capital was established at Shimla in 1827. During Ranjit Singh's lifetime his kingdom had been surrounded by them on three sides. Ranjit Singh realized it, and gave himself up to despair and

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despondency as regards his kingdom, and completely absorbed himself in the pursuit of pleasure. The conquest of the opponent's mind leads to the victim's frustration and defeat. The British supremacy and diplomacy had seized Ranjit Saingh's mind and soul. A study of the previous chapters on this subject will convince the reader that Ranjit Singh himself had indirectly entrusted his kingdom to the British during his own lifetime. In his dealings with the British Ranjit Singh behaved as if he were made of the potter's soft clay and not of steel. Due to Ranjit Singh's abject submission to the British, all his ministers, except Raja Dhian Singh, became pro-British in self-interest. All officers in his government, all his sons except his grandson Nau Nihal Singh and sardars, except Sham Singh Atariwala, the entire population, Hindu, Musalman and Sikh turned in favour of the British. The Sikh army was also anti-British; but it was commanded by foreigners and utterly selfish commanders.

In January, 1836, the famous German traveller Baron Charles Hugel wrote at Lahore: "What will become of the Sikh Empire after his death, has never occasioned Ranjit Singh a moment's anxiety. Without any religion himself, he has always outwardly conformed to the faith in which he was born, and which happens to suit his plans very well. For this life, for his own life only, he acts and builds up; only desiring that the heterogeneous parts which he has thus bound together, may continue compact while he is alive, and whether the future may see the overthrow of his kingdom, and he may be the first and the last Maharaja of the Sikhs, he cares not, so that he may die the king over all his brethren of the faith. His mind is as indifferent to the earthly immortality of fame as to the real immortality of his soul, nor does he take any thought as to who may be his successor. All his sons must be considered as fully adopted, and nothing but his express denial of them can deprive them of the rights acquired by being born in his zenana. The laws of succession of the Sikh branch to which he belongs, clearly make Kharak Singh, his eldest son, the sole heir to his throne".

"But Ranjit Singh has granted such large estates to his favourites, that it would demand more prudence than Kharak Singh possesses, to establish his own power firmly, and at the same time keep the great men of the kingdom obedient to him". After Ranjit Singh's death—"disorder and anarchy will prevail, until the whole empire becomes a portion of the vast dominions of British India."

In spite of all this, his kingdom could have been saved. But Ranjit Singh had learnt no lesson from his close connections with the British Government, except creating a trained and disciplined army. He was

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undoubtedly a great man. He very well knew that his sons were weak and incapable and that the heir apparent to whom he wanted to entrust his kingdom after his death was imbecile. He was familiar with the existence of Maratha States like Indore, Baroda and Gwalior, on the break-up of the Maratha Empire, under British protection. He also knew that Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot were quite safe under British protection. It was not possible that the whole kingdom as a single unit could be taken by the British. He could have saved it by breaking it himself into several portions under British protection in treaty relationship.

Ranjit Singh had seven sons, one capable grandson and one most favoured son Hira Singh. Roughly speaking the division should have been made like this:

1. Kharak Singh	Lahore province
2. Sher Singh	Jalandhar province
3. Tara Singh	Cis-Satluj territory of Lahore
4. Peshaura Singh	Peshawar province
5. Kashmira Singh	Gujrat province
6. Multana Singh	Multan province
7. Dalip Singh	Ladakh
8. Nau Nihal Singh	Kashmir
9. Hira Singh	Kangra hills
Dogra brothers	Jammu province

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The Sikh army should have been divided into two parts. One part could be assigned to eight provinces to maintain law and order. The Dogra Raja had their own independent army. The other half could be persuaded to join the British on the temptation of regular monthly payment, grades, ranks and pension. The Maharaja alone could do it as he was all powerful and in good books of British authorities. This arrangement should have been made in June, 1838, when the Governor-General's deputation was at Dinanagar and at Lahore. This plan should have been confirmed at the time of Lord Auckland's visit to Firozpur, six months before Ranjit Singh's death. Under this scheme the different Sikh States would have come down to our own time. The whole region would have been dominated by Sikh religion, language and culture, like the Malwa region under Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot.

The British authorities would have jumped at such a proposal. With one stroke of the pen the British empire would have extended to the Khaibar Pass. Its consequences would have been great for them. At that time, they were involved in the First Afghan War with Ranjit Singh's vast resources in men, money and material at their disposal. Afghanistan

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would have become a part and parcel of the British Empire. The dream of the British historian, V.A. Smith, would have been realized by the extension of British rule to the scientific frontiers of Chandragupta Maurya's Empire to the Hindukoh and the Persian Gulf. Besides their penetration into Turkistan, Khorasan and Iran would have been assured, and they would have anticipated Russian advance in that region long before.

Unfortunately Ranjit Singh had to face five problems which he could not solve. He had a divided house against itself, a divided cabinet, a nationalist army, his own rapidly declining health like a coconut shell without kernel, and a relentless foe. His eldest son Kharak Singh, probably due to premature birth was deficient in intellect. His son Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, an able, intelligent and energetic young man, did not like his father, and acute differences existed between them. Ranjit Singh's second son Sher Singh, a licentious fellow was a deadly enemy of Kharak Singh and his son. The remaining five sons of the Maharaja were of little importance. Thus Kharak Singh and Sher Singh and Nau Nihal Singh were the only candidates for the throne. Ranjit Singh nominated Kharak Singh his successor six days before his death in the absence of Sher Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. Both the sons were strongly in favour of the British Government, while grandson was bitterly opposed to British influence at Lahore durbar.

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His cabinet presided over by himself consisted of Prime Minister Raja Dhian Singh, Foreign Minister Faqir Aziz-ud-din, Finance Minister Diwan Dina Nath and Jamadar Khushhal Singh without portfolio. The last three were opposed to Dhian Singh, because he and his teen-aged son had got the title of Raja, and none of the trio had received any distinctive rank. Further caste differences were also there as they still exist in our own times. Dhian Singh was a Rajput, while the other two Hindus were Brahmans. The Faqir was a saintly person, but he was a very shrewd politician. The Raja was anti-British, while his three colleagues were strongly pro-British.

The army consisted overwhelmingly of Sikh youths, mostly of Majha Jats. They were loyal to the Maharaja who could keep them under control. Kharak Singh possessed no such ability. Sher Singh could command allegiance of only a part of it. Nau Nihal Singh was popular with the army, and both were anti-British.

Ranjit Singh could not reconcile these three factors. He had been a patient of many ills. Sound mind and sound health go together. He had lost the capacity to take a firm decision against perplexing difficulties.

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The British had occupied India except Ranjit Singh's kingdom and Sind. The Maharaja knew that his kingdom could not last long after him. He must have thought to preserve it by breaking it into parts. But his two sons and grandson and his cabinet would have opposed the plan for different reasons. The Sikh army could not tolerate even the very mention of it. Ranjit Singh possessed no resolution of his earlier days. On the whole he had led a normal life up to the time of Rupar meeting in 1830. Afterwards he sank into despair and desperation. He fell into a life of dissipation. He began to behave like a vassal of the British Government hoping that they would treat his successor with favourable consideration. He had forgotten that an empire builder is always ruthless. He lived in today leaving tomorrow to fickle fate.

Clime of the unforgotten brave
Whose land from plain to mountain cave
Was freedom's home or glory's grave.
–Byron

* * *

Yes, ye are made immortal on the day
Ye cease the dusty grains of time to weigh.
–W. Morris

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